

**STAFFING FOR GROWTH: CAN THE ADDITION OF PROFESSIONAL
STAFF IMPACT THE NUMERICAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH
OF A CONGREGATION?**

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FOREWORD

A “*train wreck*” occurred in 2003, and the crash scene was rather ugly. Some of us had seen it coming like a slow motion movie, but like any accident, each of us seemed unable to prevent its movement toward us. I am referring to a virtual staff meltdown in the life of First Christian Church, Decatur, Illinois, the congregation I have served since January 1994. For ten years we had dreamed of building a church where all people were welcomed and where Christian spirituality could be discovered and nurtured. Along the way we had grown in size, more than four-fold in less than ten years. A single-pastorate church established in 1834 had changed after almost one hundred and seventy years of tradition. We became a large church with a contemporary ministry with many full-time employees and pastors. We relocated to a new building designed to carry us into the coming century.

Then, at the height of all that wonder and newness, we wrecked. Bickering and misunderstanding in staff circles became the norm. Lay leadership teams were polarized and the church faced a crisis. Visions and plans for the future were no longer valid. Many staff members resigned in various degrees of disgust, anger, resentment, disappointment, and feelings of betrayal. Suddenly we were reduced to a limited pastoral team and one secretary, more than two hundred and fifty disillusioned people left the worshipping congregation, and those who remained were demoralized and stunned.

This project flows out of that experience. It does not particularly address the issues I faced with the congregation of First Christian Church. Those issues are not

public matters and should remain within our local church family. We need to demonstrate grace-filled maturity and quietness before God, before each other, and even before our brothers and sisters who are no longer part of our church or ministry team. Airing our dirty laundry is not appropriate. Besides, by God's grace we have managed to run it through a few wash cycles at this point, three years later. The washing of the Word of God has been at work within us. Nonetheless, those struggles of years ago initiated a drive within me to discover the role of staffing within local congregations. I wanted to know how congregations integrated staff teams into their ministry. The dynamics of growth in numbers and spirituality were of particular interest. We changed not only in the size of our congregation, but in our ethos of conducting congregational business and mission. The sheer numbers of people demanded change be part of our life. Those changes were first accepted or rejected in staffing circles. Some staff members understood and embraced the necessary changes; others could not. The trouble started at a staff level, not within the congregation at large. I wanted to learn how other churches moved from a single-pastorate ministry to multi-staff teams. This project then reflects those interests and questions.

At the risk of forgetting some, there are various people who need to be thanked for their participation and help throughout this project. There were many church staff members of various churches, along with members of their lay teams, who agreed to be part of the study. Their insight helped shape my conclusions. I am indebted to the present (and yes, even the former) members of the First Christian Church staff team who helped bring important aspects of this work to light. Executive Pastor Darren Embree, my right-hand in ministry, cannot be thanked enough for support, encouragement, and even the right amount of challenge. The Elders' Team, along with members of the congregation offered much support and interest. Amy Jackson, an

elder from the church, acted as my proofreader and “*grammar consultant*.” The faculty of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary proved to be extremely helpful. Ken Swetland offered valuable insight and kind advice in that regard, not only during the project, but he also wisely administered empathetic counsel to my battered soul during the events of 2003.

Finally, my wife, Leslie and our children, Jacqueline and Benjamin, helped beyond what words can say. They prodded, cajoled, pleaded, and applauded through the whole learning process. You are my love.

STAFFING FOR GROWTH: CAN THE ADDITION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF IMPACT THE NUMERICAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF A CONGREGATION?

ABSTRACT

This project focuses on churches wanting to grow in both numbers and spirituality. It evaluates the dynamics of growth within those congregations, particularly as that growth is facilitated by the professional staff of individual churches.

Most congregations indicate a desire for their ministry to move into more lives. While this may be the stated intent of most congregations, it is often not their experience. How can this be changed?

The project's conclusions are based on interviews with people of churches that have grown into multi-staff congregations.

A fictional story of a solo-pastorate congregation helps move readers through the study.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING: PASTOR WARD WANTS GROWTH

Pastor Jerry Ward sat in his office wondering what he could do to help move Orchard Street Community Church into the next chapter of its mission story. It was an internal debate and conversation that he had been having with himself for more than six months.

From all outside observations the congregation he served appeared to be healthy. Those who made up the church's membership were caring and generous people. The congregation's building was watched over with great respect. The doors had first opened to the church's charter members more than sixty years previously. Since then the roof on Orchard Street had been replaced three times, and the walls had been painted a variety of colors, each depicting the changing moods of fashion and contemporary culture. A committee of retired men faithfully labored over the grounds and landscaping, while a major remodeling project had been completed five years previously.

Pastor Ward recalled when the mortgage on the remodeling project had been burned with great fanfare just a few months after his arrival in town as the church's only pastor. That had been three years ago. The congregation was obviously made up of faithful financial stewards because the bills arriving at Orchard Street were paid within ten days of crossing the desk of the church's volunteer bookkeeper. Pastor Ward had even recently seen the new figures showing a reasonable savings account was

growing in the bank. It was money set aside by the church's trustees to be used as a rainy-day fund.

All was well. Or was it?

When needs came up in the lives of members, the church rallied together and displayed genuine compassion. In jest, it was commonly stated, "Orchard Street knows how to throw a good funeral." What people really meant was that the members knew how to rally round each other in moments of crisis, providing wonderful care. There was an informal system in place that provided a good flow of information among members, so that all knew when one household was in need of help. The church always responded in kindness and commitment.

So, all was well. Or was it?

Jerry knew the people of the church wanted to be part of a growing and vibrant community of faith. They talked about becoming larger and being able to offer a greater variety of ministries to their end of town. There was consistent discussion about their desire to reach younger families and to discover innovative ways to speak to non-believers. Some had talked about other congregations where multiple services were offered. Those worship services focused on different styles of music and audiences.

Yet for all intents and purposes, Jerry knew Orchard Street did not have the expertise or resources for all sorts of creative ministry outreaches. The kind of outreaches envisioned would require more than the congregation had to give. After all, Orchard Street was a fairly typical American church. Jerry pastored an average church.

Yet he wanted to lead his congregation beyond being another average church with an average ministry in an average city. Jerry did not want to be an average pastor leading an average congregation. Average seemed so unattractive; however, Jerry

knew that with less than one hundred and fifty in worship each week the church was an average church.¹ He wondered, “What should I do in order to lead my congregation into greater ministry endeavors and results? Is it possible to become a different type of church? Is it me? Do I have the abilities? After three years am I supposed to leave and give another pastor the chance to make this average church into a great church?”

Those familiar with real churches like the one depicted in this fictional congregation’s profile know there are a number of dynamics that need to be in place for average churches to become great churches. Moving to a larger ministry setting requires all kinds of change in congregational life. The congregation must be willing to deal with a myriad of change issues, some of which include worship styles, building size and settings, interpersonal relationships within the congregation, budgets, vision-casting, and many more. Additionally, growing from a small to larger church involves the hiring and development of professional and support staff members.

In 2001 Jim Collins released a book in which he described the major components needed to move ordinary companies from being simply good companies to great commercial enterprises. That book, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . And Others Don’t*, cited empirical data showing there are some basic principles that leaders must put in place to move their companies from good to great. Collins had expected to discover that great companies have powerfully insightful leaders who know how to declare a vision and get people to line up behind that vision. He expected that bringing a company from good to great involved motivating the

¹ Lyle E. Schaller, *The Seven-Day-a-Week Church*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 47.

Schaller, a church culture watcher indicates the average church in the USA has fewer than one hundred members. I chose to use the one hundred and fifty figure since evidence indicates one pastor can handle a church up to this size, as explained in Chapter Three.

people within the company to sign onto potent visions of the future. That was not the case. Instead Collins and his research team discovered the following:

*The executives who ignited the transformations from good to great did not first figure out where to drive the bus and then get the people to take it there. No, they first got the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) and then figured out where to drive it. They said, in essence, "Look, I don't really know where we should take this bus. But I know this much: if we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we'll figure out how to take it someplace great."*²

Can this approach to ministry and church staffing work in a local congregation?

It seems fair that most congregations want to grow both numerically and spiritually. They do not want to be stagnant or remain on a plateau. At least that is common thinking within most congregations. They want to believe their ministry will survive and flourish into the coming years. Most congregations also realize that moving from one ministry setting and size requires all kinds of change within congregational life. The full dynamics and costs of that change are likely to be more than the congregation can imagine at this point in their plans for the future. Like Orchard Street Community Church, congregations wanting growth must assess their growth potential in light of the resources they have on hand to facilitate that growth.

This project will examine the dynamics of how the staffing profile of a church impacts its potential for growth. Obviously staffing alone does not cause a small church to grow into a larger mission endeavor. The factors listed above such as worship styles and vision-casting also play important roles. These and other factors also interplay with one another, so that to say, "This produced that," is not accurate or helpful. However, for the purpose of the project, the focus will be on staffing issues, while acknowledging

² Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . And Others Don't*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), 41.

that hiring and growing professional staff cannot occur within a vacuum.³

Questions that will be examined include:

1. Can a church grow spiritually and numerically through the hiring and development of professional staff members?
2. If so, what have churches discovered in regards to hiring priorities? Should a congregation hire to meet the needs of those already in the congregation or to reach those not presently in the church? After hiring the lead pastor, what position should be filled next? Worship and music? Youth? Administrative? Education? Is there a pattern found in growing churches regarding hiring practices?
3. What about the staff mix in terms of personalities? Will staff members get along? If conflict arises, what steps should be in place to bring order and unity?
4. Who hires and leads the staff? Lead pastor? Elders? Congregation? In other words, who is the boss? Who can dismiss a staff member?
5. Can a church or ministry department grow beyond one particular staff member's abilities, and if so, what should occur in a setting like this?
6. Should staff members be hired from within the congregation or from outside sources? Regardless, how much professional training and/or formal

³ A personal note: I have served First Christian Church, Decatur, Illinois for more than thirteen years. During that time the church has grown in many ways, including worship attendance. Average worship attendance in 1993 was 172 while it passed 500 in 2006. Attendance regularly passed the 700 mark during 2003.

When I arrived in January of 1994, I was the sole full-time pastor. As the church grew we added considerable new staff members, full-time and part-time. In 2003 the church staff had a major 'train wreck' and we lost six staff members and more than 250 in regular church attendance. That struggle flowed out of many factors, but primarily out of poor staffing policies and procedures. This project is not an attempt to state the reasons for that struggle, but the project certainly flows out of a concern that I learn from those mistakes and help other congregations plan more effectively than we did at First Christian Church.

education is required to be part of a congregation's staff mix?

7. As a congregation grows, what changes are required in management styles and approaches? In personnel policies? In church dynamics and leaders? Particularly, what new thinking is required of the senior pastor in the midst of growth?

A DEFINITION

The basic goal of this project is to test a hypothesis that adding professional staff to a church's leadership team helps a congregation to grow spiritually and numerically. Of course, this hypothesis demands a definition of "*professional staff*" be in place. This is one of the goals of the project: to determine a working definition of professional staff. While the definition of church staff has to include anyone hired by a church to manage tasks that lay people could do as volunteers, the use of professional staff in this project is limited to those who fill pastoral and ministry roles. In other words, for the sake of this project, there is a difference between those who make up a full complement of a congregation's staff, versus those who are professional staff members. For example, a janitor who is hired and paid to replace a group of volunteers who used to clean the church would not be counted among the professional staff members of the church. The janitor would receive funds for the work completed, and he or she might be considered a professional maintenance worker, but would not be considered part of the professional staff of the church as defined in this project. Adding secretaries or office workers to handle the administrative needs of the church would be considered to be a church staff hire, but for the parameters of this project these administrative employees would not be included in professional staff ranks. When hired clergy or ministry roles are added to the church's staff, then that position would be

considered a professional staff role.

Other questions that surround this issue involve the training required for a person to be considered a professional staff member. Are there specific training programs that a hired person must have completed in order to be considered among the ranks of professional staff? Or is someone considered a member of the professional staff if they simply receive a paycheck for performing certain tasks? This needs to be determined.

Perhaps the results of this study will show a more controlled definition of professional staff is warranted. However, as the project begins, the parameters of the definition are fairly loose.

ASSUMPTIONS

A project of this nature must have some beginning assumptions in place to help frame the research picture. In other words, if the fictional account about Orchard Street Community Church were to be true, what basic notions would Pastor Ward need to have in mind as he began to institute growth changes in his church? What are the issues that Pastor Ward must plan to address within his own ministry and within the leadership teams of the congregation? Since this project is to deal with staffing issues alone, then the questions for Pastor Ward must have some of the following elements in mind. They will be discussed in more detail in the future, but need to be mentioned here at the outset.

Larger Churches Require Larger Staffing Models

That larger churches require larger staffs seems to be a forgone conclusion at first glance. However, is this really an understanding that is found in congregations like

Orchard Street Community Church? For example, a church that grows in its depth of spirituality should express that depth in a variety of ways, including teaching and learning opportunities along with outreach endeavors to its community and the world at large. Establishing those classes and mission works requires having leaders who focus on organizational tasks and mission objectives. Of course, this can be accomplished by lay volunteers. However, at some point, if the growth continues, lay people simply do not have enough free time to devote to the task of leadership in this area.

Years ago, Peter Wagner estimated that the typical lay person has about five hours a week available for involvement in congregational life.⁴ Perhaps that seems very few, but given the demands of work, family, and rest, then five hours might be correct. This time allotment of five hours has to include an individual's time in worship and learning settings of the church which could quickly take up to four hours per week, leaving little time for volunteer work in church activities. The layout of a typical week could look something like the following:

Weekend worship – one service	1.5 hours
Weekend class	1 hour
Mid-week class/small group	2 hours
Total	4.5 hours

While Wagner's scenario might be extreme, the pattern shown above leaves only thirty minutes for volunteer ministry in the church.

With this in mind then there is little time left for hands-on ministry and volunteer work in the example given above where a church is growing in mission and outreach to the community. There has to be a point where a staff member is hired and appointed to be an organizational leader so that lay people can be used in hands-on ministry during

⁴ Per teaching tapes from Peter Wagner focusing on Spiritual Gifts. No longer available. Based on C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, (Ventura CA: Regal Books, 1979).

the small amount of time available to them each week.

Or what if a church does grow in numbers? Just the bookkeeping responsibilities alone require more professional assistance. As a church involves more people in worship and ministry both the income and expenses of the congregation increase. Consider the difference between a church of one hundred fifty in weekly attendance versus one where six hundred people gather each week. The income difference should be about four fold. That means there are four times as many sources of income that need attention and four times as many bills to pay. Is there a point where the volunteer book-keeper might become overwhelmed with the hours required? Is there a point where the congregation requires a more focused and sustained approach to bookkeeping simply due to the high volume of work and the higher number of dollars involved? Or what if the weekly church attendance tops 4,000, as in the case of one of the congregation's reviewed later in this study? What dynamics of staffing come into play then?

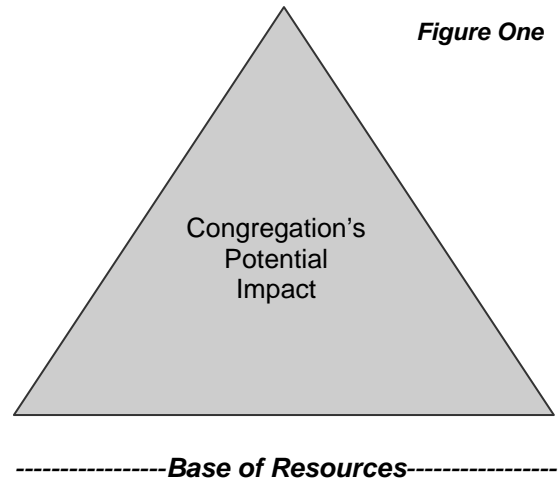
A larger church requires a larger staff.

Extending the Base of Resources

Each local congregation has a set of resources available for use in ministry. Some of those resources include the ethos and passion of congregational members, the staff mix, the physical facilities and geographical location, money in the bank or at least the funding habits of the church's members, as well as the congregation's reputation in the community. No two congregations have the same set of these resources. Each congregation is blessed by God with a particular and unique set just as each Christian is gifted with a unique set of spiritual gifts. The body of Christ is varied and diverse with each local congregation showing those variations and diversity.

These resources combine together to create a so-called *Base of Resources*.⁵

The width of this base usually determines the size and reach of the congregation's ministry as seen in Figure One to the right. A larger Base of Resources means the church's ministry will probably have a greater impact on the church's outreach and ministry targets. This potential of the church's impact is represented by the gray area shown in the triangle.



This diagram obviously calls forth a legitimate question: What has to happen to increase the size of the congregation's potential impact? That is the quandary faced by Pastor Ward at Orchard Street Community Church. Church growth anecdotes would seem to indicate that many congregations strive to add to the top of the triangle through fast growth incentives. These can fail simply by making the triangle misshaped and wobbly. Short term solutions are not the answer.

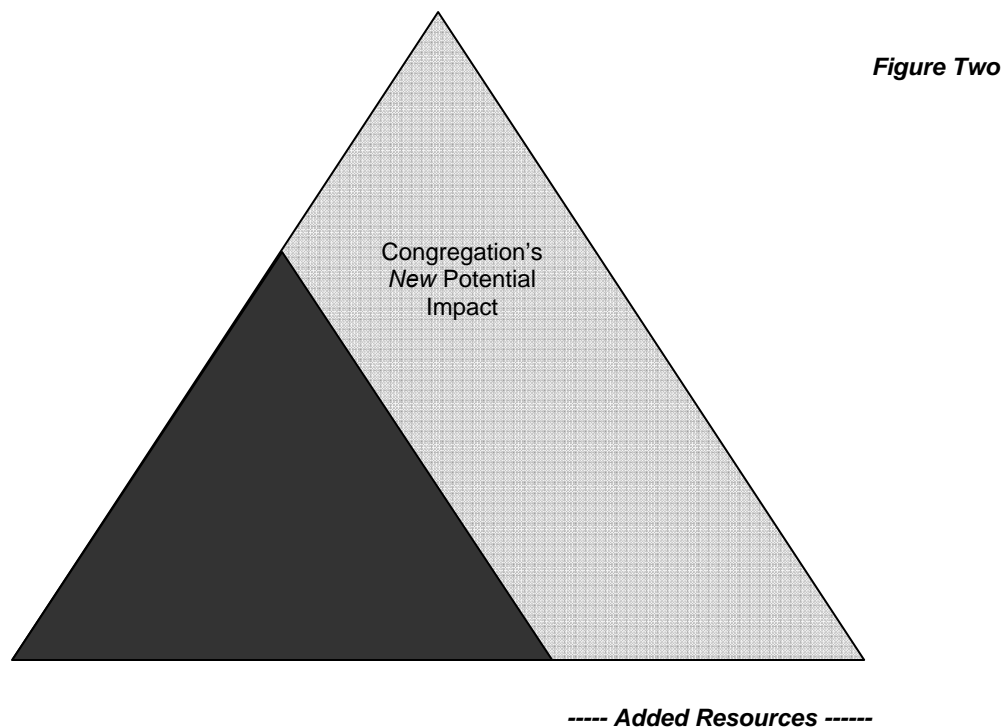
It makes more sense to add to the Base of Resources through long-term additions. This will promote a growth pattern along one whole side of the church's ministry as seen in Figure Two on the next page.

The triangle is still balanced while the area of new potential impact has increased dramatically. In fact, by increasing the Base of Resources by approximately 50% the potential for new ministries is more than doubled. (Please note that the dark

⁵ It should be noted that this Base of Resources idea was not created by me. It is a concept that I recall hearing about in a church setting as a young teenager. The origin of this concept is unknown to me.

triangle in Figure Two is exactly the same size as the triangle in Figure One showing how additions to the Base of Resources have a significant impact on the overall size of the triangle.)

In essence this discussion about adding to the Base of Resources could be likened to the metaphor of priming a pump. The goal is to add to the base prior to



actually needing to use those resources. In the case of priming the pump at Orchard Street Community Church, Pastor Ward and the congregation could add staff before the numerical needs of the church warrant such an addition. The added staff would be hired in expectation of a larger church needing a more qualified and substantial staff mix.

Surely, strategic planning and the implementation of adding professional staff to

their congregation's Base of Resources should be a significant consideration for Pastor Ward and Orchard Street Community Church. The congregation could see their ministry impact grow dramatically. They could grow spiritually and numerically.

This approach to growing a church is one of the basic assumptions of this project.

Spiritual Gifts

Scripture shows that one of God's greatest accomplishments of the New Testament was the establishment of the 1st Century Church. Individuals, who did not initially understand the long term needs of their fledgling faith, developed systems that are still in place today, some 2,000 years later. The Church of today flows out of what those early Christians learned and the patterns of congregational life they set in order.

Of course, the Apostle Paul was one of the main characters of influence in New Testament congregations. When writing to the congregation at Ephesus, Paul brought up an issue that has a direct bearing on this project. It is one of the main assumptions behind the research that was developed for this project. While mentioning the role of Jesus Christ within the congregation, Paul stated that some within the Body of Christ were given specific spiritual gifts regarding congregational leadership and ministry development. He stated:

. . . it was he (Jesus) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV) ⁶

⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references: *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Corporation and the International Bible Society, 1973).

There can be no doubt that Paul was referring to gifted people with particular spiritual gifts that needed to be used in bringing growth to the congregation at Ephesus. He wanted the body of Christ there to be built up, to grow. A review of these spiritual gifts and/or roles quickly indicates that the present-day use of them is often and usually found in staff members of local congregations. It is local congregations that usually identify apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.⁷ And those with these roles are usually working in local congregational settings to some degree, striving to bring growth to those individual churches.

That people with these gifts are to bring about growth within local congregations is a basic assumption of this project.

A RESPONSE TO GOOD TO GREAT

As mentioned previously, Jim Collin's book, *Good to Great*, showed that the success of the most progressive and leading companies of the nation does not come from their goals or visions or plans. Instead, great companies know how to hire incredibly talented people who then work together to create powerhouses of industry and finance. The leaders of those companies do not start with a great vision and then hire to meet that vision. A compelling vision is required, but that is put in place only after great people are hired.

Collins and his research team evaluated 1435 companies that were listed on the Fortune 500 from 1965 to 1995. Only eleven companies excelled in all the criteria set up by the team.⁸ In other words, while there were many good companies, less than

⁷ Of course differing denominational settings might not include all these positions and roles within their own ministries, however the point remains: these professional roles are to be used to build up the body of Christ.

⁸ Collins, *Good to Great*, 220.

one tenth of a percent of these large Fortune 500 companies could be considered great.

The book created a stir within the business world. It also created a stir within the religious community. Some wondered how Collins' findings could be applied to life in the Church.

Thom Rainer (presently President of Lifeway Christian Resources, a publishing house within the Southern Baptist Convention) assembled a team of researchers that duplicated Collins' research methods and applied them to churches across America. They evaluated more than 50,000 local congregations and uncovered only thirteen churches that exceeded the team's criteria. They called these congregations, "*Breakout Churches*." ⁹

Like Collins, Rainer and his researchers discovered hiring the right people for positions within the congregation was essential for the development of these breakout churches. These breakout churches became known because of many different traits, but each one focused particular attention on their hiring habits and plans. The results of Rainer's research and discovery in regards to staffing in local congregations will help form some of the parameters of this study.

FORMAT OF THE PROJECT

The format for research for this project will be explained and evaluated in Chapter Four of this report; however, the following should be seen as a beginning framework for the project.

Primarily, research will focus on a series of personal interviews. Church leaders

⁹ Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

of congregations that have experienced spiritual and numerical growth will be identified and interviewed. Their insight will be evaluated and compared, looking for common themes and understandings. The following criteria will be used to determine who should be interviewed:

1. The congregation must be at least fifteen years old. This will help prevent evaluating congregations that are growing as a result of a local fad or trend within one community.
2. The congregation's size and spirituality should have grown during the fifteen-year period.
3. There should have been a fairly significant change in staffing numbers during the fifteen-year period.
4. The congregation should have a staff level of at least three professional staff members.
5. The person responsible for hiring and firing should be part of the interview. If a committee/team is given that responsibility, then a member of that team should be involved in the interview discussion.
6. The congregations will not all be the same in regards to theology, polity, or ethnic and racial mix.

A beginning outline of questions for each interview should include the following:

1. How long have you been part of this church? What is your role?
2. How has the church changed in the time you have been here?
3. Detail the numerical growth of the church over the last fifteen years.
4. Who sets the agenda or vision of the church?
5. Describe the process of hiring staff members.

6. Who decides it is time to hire new staff members? What criteria are used in this decision?
7. Is there a particular order of hiring that has worked; i.e. Senior Pastor, followed by Youth Pastor, followed by Worship Arts and Christian Education leader, and so on?
8. How has the church benefited from hiring additional staff members? Have they facilitated spiritual growth? Have they facilitated numerical growth? What impact have staff members had on the life of the church?
9. Who determines a staff member's job description? Pay scale? Benefits?
10. What role does the Senior Pastor have in making staffing decisions?
11. Have there been changes in the way in which staff issues are handled? What has evolved in staff hiring, development, and supervision as the number of staff has grown?
12. Has the church faced staff conflict during the last fifteen years? If so, what happened and how was it resolved? If not, how has staff conflict been avoided?
13. What was the result of staff hiring mistakes that you have made? Where are the points of pain found in the church as a result of those errors?
14. What are the lessons learned along the way that you wish you had known before the hiring process and growth got underway?
15. How have you discerned the voice of God and the power of the Holy Spirit through your hiring practices?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

It is expected that this study will prove or disprove a number of ideas including:

1. Hiring professional staff impacts a congregation's growth potential, both spiritually and numerically.
2. Good staffing decisions bring tremendous blessings and growth.
3. Poor staffing choices and/or poorly-made decisions to add or not add staff impact a congregation in a negative fashion.
4. Growing congregations make both good and bad staffing decisions as they learn new dynamics of this part of congregational life. If a congregation grows from small to large, hiring practices present a steep corporate learning curve.
5. Growing congregations evolve in their understanding of how to handle staffing decisions.
6. A growing congregation that does not learn how to effectively hire staff will not continue to grow.
7. There will be times of staff conflict in all growing churches as they move into new understandings of their role and ministry in a local setting.
8. Unresolved staff conflict has a negative impact on the growth potential of congregations.
9. Some staff members' abilities will not grow with the church's demands and growing ministry. This will force the senior leaders of a church to make difficult choices.
10. The Senior Pastor must be involved in the decisions about hiring professional staff members.

11. Adding professional staff to a congregation's ministry can be joyous or tumultuous, productive or destructive.
12. Church leaders intuitively know they need God's guidance and the power of the Holy Spirit as they make staffing decisions. They know these decisions will have a significant impact on congregational life. Finding that voice of God in the midst of their decision process is often a long, arduous task.

CHAPTER TWO

PASTOR WARD'S THEOLOGICAL PLAN

Any pastor wanting to initiate a change within congregational life must help his or her congregation to see a need for that change. Pastor Ward knew that it seemed right to want his congregation to be more than an average church with an average ministry in an average city. At least it felt right within his heart. He faced a question though about whether the members of the church would agree. After all, as previously mentioned, all seemed well in the church. Ministry flowed from one person to another within the congregation. People seemed fairly content with the weekly schedule of worship and teaching services. The bills were paid and the building was in good shape.

Nonetheless, Pastor Ward wondered if he might have a problem. While some in the church hoped that younger families might soon begin attending Orchard Street Community, a recent conversation with a long-term member had the pastor anticipating a challenge. The member had stated:

Pastor, have you heard about what's going on over at Lakeside Baptist Church? You know the pastor there, I'm sure. He made the church go through a bunch of changes, and now suddenly they've more than doubled in size in the last three years. They used to be a church like us, where everyone knows each other. There was a sense of family connection there. Now, it's gone.

I hear from friends who have been there for years, and they don't feel like it's their church anymore. They don't know everyone. They don't even know all the staff, because there's been so much new hiring going on. That pastor is using people in the worship services who are brand new to the congregation. I'm so glad that you're content for us to remain smaller and simple in our approach to church life.

Jerry had left the conversation without giving an opinion about Lakeside Baptist Church's new ministry styles. In fact, he had recently spent some time with the pastor of the church across town and had two responses; he was glad for Lakeside, and he was envious at the same time. Following the conversation with his parishioner, Jerry knew there might be some opposition to his dreams of seeing Orchard Street change.

Bringing change to a congregation is a difficult task that requires a great deal of energy. Members have to understand the need for the unsettling dynamics of change. Congregational change disrupts comfortable ministry patterns and lifestyles. Roles, resources, and responsibilities have to be shifted to new areas of ministry. New thinking has to be established. A leader pushing for successful change has to bring teaching to the church, helping members embrace a new life together.

Pastor Ward's best place to start that teaching about change is found within the pages of scripture. Scripture certainly promotes congregational growth in numbers and spirituality. Jerry can create opportunities for the Holy Spirit to use the stories and teachings of the bible to speak to the members of his church who might be resistant to change. Some of these biblical understandings are presented below. They are outlined with two major thoughts in mind within a theological framework:

1. Churches should and can grow in size and spirituality, and
2. Solid leadership is required to facilitate this growth, and, in fact, that leadership must include paid and trained staff.

CHURCHES SHOULD AND CAN GROW IN NUMERICAL SIZE AND SPIRITUALITY

This is a biblical mandate, and, with God's leadership, it is surely possible. Congregations must learn to have an attitude which says, "Don't limit God!" Scripture

shows God's ability to go beyond human thoughts and plans. It says,

*Now to him who is able to do **immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine**, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations.*

Ephesians 3:20-21(NIV) (emphasis added)

Jerry Ward's congregation needs to accept the power and reality of this scripture. More has been accomplished in and through the congregation than most dreamed possible. Orchard Street Community Church, started more than sixty years previously, is a credible part of the community. People have come to faith in Christ. Baptisms have taken place. Births, weddings, and funerals have all been part of the congregation's life. The work of the Holy Spirit has been evident year after year. The dreams of the charter members are now a reality.

A brief word study of scripture's language in regards to "*immeasurably*" as found listed above would be helpful here. After all, what did the Apostle Paul mean? What can Jerry Ward communicate to his congregation regarding God's plans for the church? Does God really have plans to go further than what can be imagined?

This passage is part of Paul's larger prayer for the church at Ephesus. In this context then, a legitimate question comes to mind. Is Paul stating a theological concept regarding God's abilities, or simply expressing a written hope about what he expects the Ephesians to experience? Is this theology or wishful thinking? Paul prays:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (NIV)

In the context of Paul's whole prayer, it must surely be stated that verse 20, beginning with the second paragraph contains Paul's theological understanding of God's abilities. This is more than wishful thinking.

If there is wishful thinking or better yet, hopeful prayer in this passage, then that can be seen in verses 14-19, the first paragraph. Paul is kneeling before God, asking that the Ephesians would have Spirit-led power and Christ-given love in their lives. He wants them to grow in spiritual understanding. Paul hopes they become more mature in acceptance of all God wants to do in them, right up to the full extent of God's plan for them.

This idea and hopeful expectation carries on through to the end of the first paragraph, verse 19. Then there is a sense that Paul gets up from his knees and raises his hands in praise toward heaven in his concluding statement of verses 20 and 21, the second paragraph. This is no longer hopeful prayer but a doxological declaration of theology. God is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. In other words, Paul is saying, "I pray what I can imagine for you Ephesians. I hope you will grow in love and spiritual understanding. That's my wish, my hope. Here's what I know though: God is able to go far beyond what I can imagine." The prayer reflects Paul's theology.

Paul's original Greek word in Ephesians 3:20 regarding *immeasurably* is *huperekperissóu* (ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ). It is a rare compound adverb used by Paul here in

Ephesians, and later in 1 Thessalonians 3:10 and 5:13,¹⁰ meaning “. . . something extraordinary, of that which is not usually encountered among men.”¹¹ Apparently Paul had an inclination to use compound words like this. As Skevington Wood points out, “A predilection for *hyper* compounds is a Pauline hallmark.”¹²

Two parts make up this word, *hyper* and *perissos*.¹³ The best place to begin this word study is with the second part, *perissos*, meaning excessive. This is found in other places within Paul’s writings besides Ephesians. For example, Paul uses this word when quoted by the author of Acts 26:11 as he is being interrogated by King Agrippa. Paul states that prior to his personal conversion to Christ, he had an excessive (*perissos* - *περισσώς*) rage within him directed toward Christians. The NIV translates this as an “*obsession*.” This obsession led Paul to his murderous missions bringing about the martyrdom of a number of the early Christians. In other words, Paul’s rage was beyond measure and was excessive (*perissos*), and then led to acts of great impact. People died.

This passage from Acts leaves a bad taste in the mouth for excessive behavior or thinking. At first glance it would indicate that this kind of obsession leads to acts of devastation that no one would want to emulate. However, what if there was a different

¹⁰ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians: Word Biblical Commentary*, (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 42: 216.

¹¹ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek – English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A Translation and Adaptation of Walter Baur’s Griechisch – Duetsches Wörterbuch zu dei Schriften des Neun Testaments und der übrigen unchristlichen Literatur*, Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition, 1952. (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1957). Sixteenth Impression, 1974, 657.

¹² F. E. Gæbelein, gen. ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), vol. 11, *Ephesians*, by A. Skevington Wood, 53.

¹³ W.E. Vine and F.F. ed. Bruce, “Abundance, Abundant, Abundantly, Abound, Exceed, Exceeding, Exceedingly,” *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*, (London: Oliphant’s Ltd., Old Tappan NJ: Fleming H Revell Co, 1981).

focus of obsessive and excessive thinking or behavior that led to better outcomes? This is an appropriate question because there are other uses of *perissos* within the New Testament pointing to better desired results. They move away from death as an outcome of obsession and point to life. For example, in Romans 5:17 and 5:20 the word *exceeding* (*perissos*) is used to describe the abundance and overflowing measure of God's grace found in Jesus Christ. It is this grace that overcomes sin. That grace is described in these passages as an abundant provision that increases further than any sin might grow.

In this case then, as compared to Paul's exceeding rage and/or obsession, God's exceeding grace has brought about an action of great impact that is surely desired. Instead of an act of devastation leading to martyrdom and death, when *exceeding* is added to God's grace, humanity's eternal destiny is impacted and brought to life. The exceeding grace of God initiated Jesus' incarnation, changed the course of human history, and brought salvation to all those who choose to claim Christ as lord and savior.

Here is the powerful point: when *exceeding* (*perissos*) is added to any emotion or act, be it anything across a spectrum from rage to grace, the resulting actions have a powerful impact. Thus, when Paul asserts that God wants to do immeasurably and exceedingly more than can be imagined, the results will certainly have a dramatic impact.

With that being stated, a full understanding of the language of Ephesians 3:20 requires a review of the first half of the word as well. As stated earlier, the full word is *huperekperissóu*. Something is added to *perissou* bringing about a greater emphasis of Paul's expectations of God's abilities. *Huperek* has its roots in *hyperbole* (ὑπερβολή).

The connections to the English word *hyperbole* are obvious. Hyperbole is a speech tactic used to emphasize a point being stated or argued. For example, the description of a sunny day using hyperbole could read as follows: *The daylight was more than simply the absence of night and darkness. The sun's light etched shadows onto the side walk. Its brightness was beyond bright. All flat surfaces acted as mirrors both reflecting and magnifying each individual ray of sun. It was if the air was made of thousands of sand granules from the Sahara Desert, each sending out a mirage of shimmering light.*

The use of hyperbole has dramatically emphasized the day's brightness. The description moves beyond what is obvious, that if the sun is not covered by clouds, then the day is brighter. Hyperbole not only emphasizes the statement about daylight, but actually uses exaggeration in an effort to make a point.

This is what Paul has done in Ephesians. He is emphasizing God's ability to do more than what can be measured. God's abilities go beyond the obvious. Human reason would limit what God can or would accomplish. Imagination can only take a thought process to a certain limit, yet God can move beyond that human stopping point.

Thus Orchard Street Community Church or any similar congregation in a real life setting can accomplish much with God's power moving through plans and procedures. If God has abilities and plans that go beyond the imagination, then surely churches should move into their futures with great expectations.

This insight should not be surprising in light of scriptural evidence. After all, consider some of the seemingly hopeless or impossible situations of the bible: God parted the Red Sea for Moses and the children of Israel, Jesus fed five thousand

people with five loaves and two fish, and Paul and Silas were freed from prison when God sent an earthquake. Scripture shows God is not limited by anyone's small ideas. God was and is the Creator of miracles! The pastor and congregation of Orchard Street Community Church need to be reminded that the same God who brought those miracles into the lives of the characters of scripture is able to work in the life of their church. They must believe that while their resources of five loaves and two fish may seem small, in the work of God great movements are possible.

Numerical Growth

The God who supplied power behind all those miracles also instructed Christian believers to move in that same power. Jesus plainly told his disciples to increase the influence of his ministry. They were told to go to all peoples and share his story. All followers of Christ since that time are charged with what is known as the Great Commission.

This means that the people of churches like Orchard Street Community have a responsibility to bring others to faith in Christ. The numerical attendance figures of the church should grow. Those figures should be the focus of some of the discussions of leadership teams.

Should there be a worry that congregations will focus on numbers, a concern on how many are sitting in the pews? Will these churches become like secular entities more concerned with market share and visibility instead of people? Those worries seem to reflect a desire to keep the status quo stable rather than a drive to work through the struggles and issues that come up when numbers of new people are added to a congregation's life. Despite the challenges brought by numerical growth, a desire to keep the status quo on an even keel is not a viable reading of the Great

Commission. The Church and, consequently, individual congregations are called to reach non-believers, introduce them to Jesus Christ, and then add them to the numbers already in the church. Christians have that responsibility. Numbers are extremely important because each number represents a person. Each new person who is included within the body of Christ, who has submitted to Jesus' lordship, and relies on Jesus' work at Calvary, represents another soul who will spend eternity in heaven. One less soul will not face an eternal damnation in Satan's fires of torment and evil.¹⁴ Pastor Ward and his congregation can impact what happens in the eternal plan of individuals within their community. Numbers do matter.

A Model From Acts

The Early Church of the New Testament period modeled this approach to growth. Acts describes the life of the church in Jerusalem in the years immediately following the Day of Pentecost and the arrival of the Holy Spirit. It is quite plain the church grew in numbers. After all, what started out as a small group of Jesus' followers numbering about one hundred and twenty (*Acts 1:15*) actually grew into a present day mega-sized church in one day. That happened in response to Peter's sermon as outlined in Acts 2. About three thousand people became Christian believers following his explanation of the coming of the Holy Spirit as it related to Jesus' ministry. The church grew. It happened in a number of hours. That kind of growth is not an example

¹⁴ I recently heard from a woman who no longer attends First Christian Church, Decatur. She indicated that she and her family left our congregation after we began to act and think like a larger church. She stated, "We left after things became more important than people."

Sadly she missed the point of what we learned in recent years. The call of the Great Commission in the life of our church meant that we were no longer focusing on being one big cozy family. We came to learn those dynamics were preventing us from reaching out to non-believers.

In fact, the thinking behind the church's recent changes is opposite to what the woman described. We are very concerned about people, about reaching out to those outside the church (as well as those inside), but we needed a new model for ministry as a larger church. We have had to change.

of the status quo remaining in place. Of course that day was exciting, but it must have proven to be a little unsettling as well to those who were the original followers of Jesus. They must have had to bring about some adaptations in how they approached their ministry to each other and the community.

This attention to the figure three thousand is in keeping with the observations noted throughout the book of Acts. It seems that as he wrote Acts, Luke was quite concerned about getting his facts and figures correct. He focused on details, including numbers and the growth of the church. For example, the following passages from Acts all point to congregations growing larger.

Acts 2:41 . . . were baptized, and about three thousand were **added** to their number that day.

Acts 2:47 And the Lord **added** to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 5:14 . . . more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were **added** to their number.

(NIV)(emphasis added)

There is a pattern here in the early record of the Church in Acts and within the New Testament that consistently points to people being added to Church in Jerusalem. It appears someone was counting. Numbers are important in the life of a congregation. There should be numerical growth

Faithfulness Versus Fruit

If numerical growth was the norm within the life of First Church Jerusalem, as seen in Acts, and if that is the pattern established by God in the New Testament, then legitimate questions must be posed. Why is it that some churches today have not grown in years? Has the Holy Spirit stopped moving in and through them? Is there a

viable model of faithful ministry in a congregation without numerical growth at the same time? Can a church be faithful without numerical success? Is success judged solely by the numbers of people who respond to ministry?

The Old Testament can certainly provide examples of faithful ministry where people did not respond and the proclamation of God's word did not bring a change in attitudes or behavior. Various Old Testament prophets faithfully spoke truth into the life of the community around them with no response that could point to numerical success. The prophet Hosea's ministry and the lack of response within his own family is a primary example.

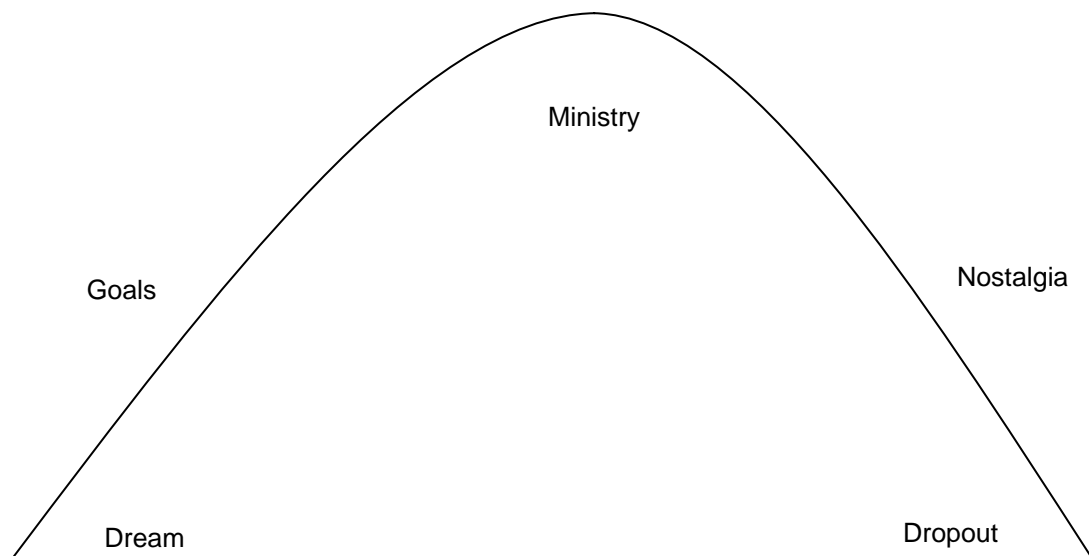
Hosea's ministry was directed toward the Northern Kingdom, Israel, in the period prior to the kingdom's annihilation by the Assyrians. He warned of the nation's impending doom. The short version of the long story of the Northern Kingdom's history is that the nation did not respond to Hosea's message and, consequently, forsook the divine protection of God. Hosea portrays Israel as an adulterous nation. The nation did not respond despite his faithful preaching; consequently, the nation was annihilated.

Hosea's marriage, as depicted in the first three chapters of the book, mirrors the story of Israel. Apparently Hosea was married to Gomer, a woman who was known to have a predilection for marital unfaithfulness. She moved back and forth from their family home into houses of prostitution. Hosea, in obvious distress, would call her to marital fidelity. Sometimes Gomer would listen, and sometimes Hosea's call would be of no avail.

While his marital life was miserable, Hosea still faithfully used the word of God to speak to both Gomer and to the larger kingdom. He was faithful, but they did not listen. Is this a potential model for some congregations that consistently speak God's

word but have no visible response from outsiders?

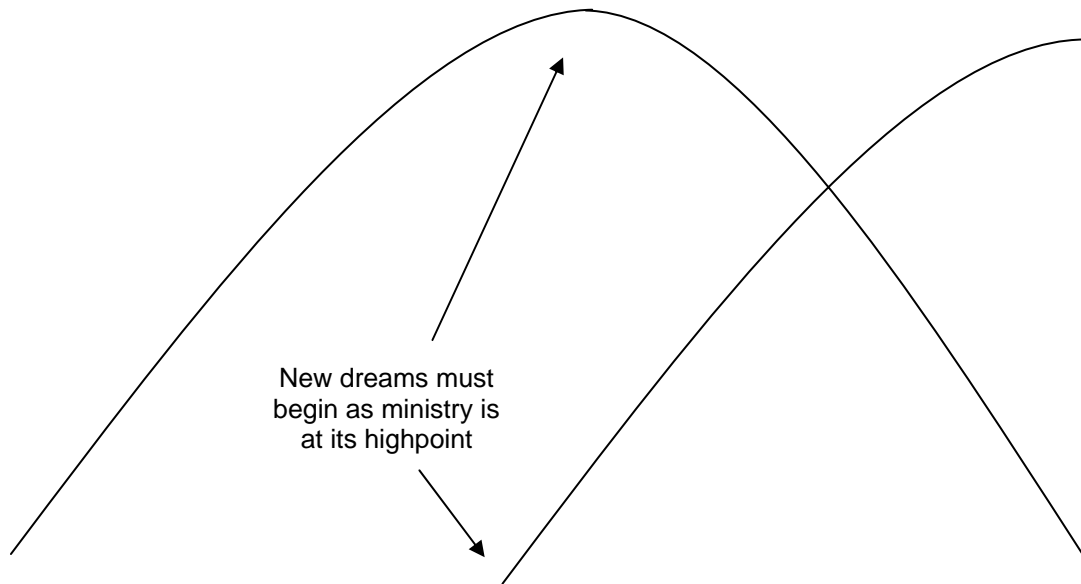
Local congregations have a life cycle that has been portrayed as a bell curve. This life cycle is about twenty-five to forty years in duration. Robert Dale has analyzed this life cycle as seen below in his book, *To Dream Again: How to Help Your Church Come Alive*.



Dale's model shows how congregations begin the cycle with dreaming and programming which results in the establishment of a church's ministry. As this ministry flourishes, the congregation reaches the highpoint of its potential. It is also at this point that the same congregation begins to decline into eventual death. The cycle can only be broken if church leadership teams begin a new dreaming and planning process, even as their present ministry is flourishing.¹⁵ This new setting, as seen on the next page, shows that if congregations do not begin dreaming about a new life cycle while at the high point of their ministry, they will experience decline and eventual death.

¹⁵ Robert Dale, *To Dream Again*, (Nashville TN: Broadman Press, 1981), 17,19.

For more information on this model and the challenge of developing new dreams, see: Alice Mann, *Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline*, (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1999).



This has important implications for churches that have reached a plateau in terms of numbers, but who still have viable ministry taking place within their own membership ranks. These congregations are obviously being faithful to God's word through members caring for each other, bearing each others burdens, and thus fulfilling the law of Christ (*Galatians 6:2*).

They are faithful, but they do not see membership increasing; and new converts joining them is not part of their congregational experience. It could even be said that members are potentially growing spiritually through the exercise of caring for each other, since Jesus clearly called for his followers to be people who care and love and clothe and visit those in need (*Matthew 25*). There is a problem for these churches though. Even in the best of circumstances where care is being provided and members are faithful in living Christian lives of holiness and spirituality, these churches are not becoming larger. In fact, due to simple attrition, the churches are dying. This is faithfulness without numbers increasing. As Fr. Patrick Brennan, coordinator for the

Center for Evangelization, Catechesis, and Religious Education for Loyola University Institute of Pastoral Studies, says, “There’ll be two churches in the future, a dwindling church with an aging, dying structure and a mission church reaching out to people.”¹⁶

Some congregations in these settings may be past the point of creating new dreams to put in place. A valid case can be made for these congregations’ faithfulness and appropriately so. Nonetheless, and despite the Old Testament prophets’ model, these churches are hard-pressed to find a New Testament model of congregations being faithful without also growing in numbers. Is it possible that our present church culture has accepted this approach to the forty-or-so-year church life cycle as too normal? It is certainly seen a great deal, and a case could be made that is it almost the norm within the United States. Perhaps these faithful-but-dying churches should be the exception to the rule. A better model would consist of church growth in both faithfulness (spirituality) and numbers.

Spiritual Growth

The focus of this project asks a question. Can the addition of professional staff impact both numerical and spiritual growth of a congregation? The discussion above has outlined the need for each congregation to grow in numbers. Now a review of scripture’s expectations regarding spiritual growth is warranted. The numerical growth argument focused on Jesus’ Great Commission and the narrative of the Early Church. The same approach will be used while discussing spiritual growth.

The Great Commission has been used to point out Jesus’ expectation that Christians should be bringing new converts into the life of the Church. His command is quite clear in that regard. However, his commission also has a second component.

¹⁶ C. Jeff Woods, *Congregational Megatrends*, (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1996), 32.

Jesus' followers are to be bringing new converts into the life of the Church and to be teaching those converts and all disciples about his work and ministry. Christians are to obey all that he taught and modeled. The implied intent of that command is that believers should grow in spirituality as they determine the call of scripture in regards to lifestyles, thinking patterns, and compassionate care for all people and the whole created order. A new world-view patterned after God's eye is the mandate. This requires spiritual growth.

The people of Orchard Street Community Church need to facilitate spiritual growth within the lives of those under their care.

This implication of scripture in regards to spiritual growth is also fortified by the observations of the witnesses recorded in Acts. Those witnesses described the Early Church in fairly clear language (*Acts 2 and 4*).

The new converts' intention is clearly seen in Acts 2:42 (*see bold typeface below*). They listened to the Apostles' teachings and then applied their new faith knowledge to lifestyles and habits. Their lives were changed as a result of what they learned:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47(NIV) (emphasis added)

A brief discussion of the converts' devotion to the apostles' teaching is warranted at this point in order to shed light on their intensity in regards to spiritual

maturity. The Greek word describing this devotion, *proskartereó* (προσκατερέω) is used in a variety of settings within the New Testament literature. It means:

- 1 to adhere to one, be his adherent, to be devoted or constant to one.
- 2 to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing.
- 3 to continue all the time in a place.
- 4 to persevere and not to faint.
- 5 to show one's self courageous for.
- 6 to be in constant readiness for one, wait on constantly.¹⁷

How does this apply to the converts' approach to putting the apostles' teachings in place in their new faith? Other uses of *proskartereó* as found in Romans 13:6 are helpful in this matter. In this passage the Apostle Paul is speaking about the full-time responsibilities of those who are in governmental authority. They have to give their full-time attention to the work. It is their daily job. The bulk of their lives are devoted to dealing with the issues that come with governing. Paul indicates that secular authorities have to continually focus on the task of running the government. They are to work as servants of God. The point as it relates to this discussion is that these leaders have to pour all their energy into the leadership roles assigned to them.

It is a similar approach to the use of *proskartereó* in two other passages. In Acts 8:13 Simon, the magician, attached himself to the Christian evangelist, Philip, going everywhere with him. There is a sense there is no separation of Simon from Philip. Then the narrative in Acts 10:7 speaks of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, who had two servants and a military aide. They were at his side (*proskarteroné*) at all times, ready to wait on him and to pay attention to his needs and/or commands. While Cornelius is the subject of the narrative, the brief aside mentioning the servants and military aide is helpful given the present discussion. Again there is a sense that there is no separation

¹⁷ Strong, J., 1996. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order*, (electronic ed.) (Ontario, Canada: Woodside Bible Fellowship).

between Cornelius and his helpers. The aide particularly is always close at hand. He pays full attention to Cornelius' wishes.¹⁸

With this in mind then, there is a clearer understanding of the actions of the people who make up the church in Jerusalem. Their devotion to the apostles' teaching can be described as fairly consuming. They paid attention to what they were taught. While it might not have been their full-time work, they certainly approached their growing spiritual maturity with diligent focus and attention. Perhaps, like Cornelius' military aide, they were never far from the side of one of the apostles, striving to take in all of Jesus' life and ministry as the apostles traced the narrative of their interaction with him.

It is no wonder then that dramatic results came along in the lives of the new converts. They not only increased in numbers, but in spirituality as well. The Early Church of Jerusalem grew. They listened to the apostles' teachings and paid attention to how their spiritual lives impacted both fellow Christians and non-believers alike. The results of their growth included the good favor of those around them, which in turn caused the churches to grow in numbers. Growth came in the spiritual lives of the Christians as well as in the numbers of people who counted themselves as followers of Jesus Christ. The apostles' teachings and leadership helped bring about spiritual maturity in those who followed after them.

This idea of a leader bringing focused spiritual growth in a follower is a basic understanding within the New Testament ministry model. The disciples followed and learned from Jesus. He taught them spiritual truths. Admittedly, the Holy Spirit must have taught them much after the Day of Pentecost. Additionally, they had to muddle

¹⁸ Vine, "Attend, Attendance, Attendant," in *Vines Expository Dictionary*.

through a number of important issues regarding theology and practice as Jesus' message began to impact non-Jewish people. There were many debates about how to handle their growing religion as it spread. However, they would have lacked the basics of their faith and a beginning expertise and knowledge of church life if they had not spent three years following Jesus. He taught them as they listened.

There are other personalities from the New Testament record, besides the disciples, who learned from following. For example, the Apostle Paul learned from the expertise and spiritual depth of Ananias. Paul then set up traveling apprenticeships for John Mark and Timothy.

Thus it can be stated with clarity that the New Testament shows the need for clear leadership in helping people grow in spiritual maturity. That spiritual maturity can then be used in turn as a mission point to bring about numerical growth in the life of congregations and the Church as a whole. The growth patterns and habits of the Early Church should be emulated. This is the biblical pattern. Churches should grow spiritually and numerically. Individuals' lives should be changed for the sake of that individual and for the sake of non-believers looking into a life of faith. And with this assumption comes a legitimate question: what can facilitate this growth?

SOLID LEADERSHIP IS REQUIRED TO FACILITATE THIS GROWTH,
AND, IN FACT, THAT LEADERSHIP MUST INCLUDE
PAID AND TRAINED STAFF

Ministry Specialists

Christians believe the progress of God's agenda for the whole created order, for congregations, and for individuals is initiated by a divine work of the Holy Spirit. Certainly the growth that is needed at Orchard Street Community Church must begin with the Holy Spirit's plan being made clear. That plan must be prayerfully discovered

and acted upon.

Scripture points out that specially trained and experienced people are needed to put this plan in place. People like Pastor Jerry Ward of Orchard Street Community Church are required. For example, the story of Timothy serving as pastor of the Christian congregation in Ephesus shows that while God had a Holy-Spirit-initiated plan for that church, the design had to be brought to reality by the young pastor. The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy:

. . . stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies . . . They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

I Timothy 1:3-4, 7(NIV)

The young pastor Timothy had to take on a specific leadership role through teaching and instructing those under his pastoral care. The responsibility involved being an agent of both information and correction. This is plain in the passage listed above and throughout the remainder of Paul's letter.

The rest of the book details Paul's instructions to Timothy giving him advice in how to deal with the congregation's issues and struggles. There is talk of matters relating to worship practices, the guidelines for appointing deacons and elders, along with personal advice to Timothy to help him deal with his role as pastor of the church.

It's quite clear Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus as the "in-resident expert" needed by the congregation. Both letters found in scripture from Paul to Timothy point to the young pastor's need to be trained for the situation he faced. Any reading-between-the-lines of those epistles points to all sorts of dilemmas. Apparently false doctrines based on myths and genealogies were being promoted within the

congregation (*1 Timothy 1:3-4*). Paul indicated only Timothy could correct these problems. He could accomplish this as a result of his previous apprenticeship under Paul. That apprenticeship combined with the long-distance learning Timothy received through Paul both point to the need for professional help in ministry. Perhaps the situation such that in essence Paul was saying, “Timothy, there is a lot of strange stuff occurring in the life of your church. It’s time to deal with it. Since you are the one with training, then you have to lead accordingly. You are the professional.” Timothy was indeed the professional in the situation since Paul instructs Timothy to teach and preach the truths of scripture (*1 Timothy 4:11–14*) and to include an expectation of payment for those teachings:

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.”

1 Timothy 5:17-18 (NIV)

A question arises. Is it possible that since Paul gave Timothy a firm mandate to preach and teach, and then coupled that injunction with a concern that preachers and teachers be paid, did Paul consider Timothy’s role in the church to be a professional staff person? The pastoral situation in Ephesus required expert help and direction. Timothy provided that professional leadership. He was the man chosen for the job. He obviously had skills that complemented the job requirements. Perhaps it might be reasonable to assume Timothy was paid for his services.

The scriptural narrative of Timothy’s pastoral ministry does not show if he acted as a solo pastor in Ephesus. Perhaps he had additional workers “on staff” with him besides the elders that he appointed. That is unknown. However, if the congregation in Ephesus grew and new believers were added, it seems reasonable that other leaders

became part of the professional staff within the church.

This possibility has some bearing on the present discussion because as a congregation adds staff members, decisions come along regarding which staff member will fill what role. Should a church hire individuals who can all be generalists in ministry? Or, should a congregation create positions that require staff members to fill specific roles?

As mentioned briefly in Chapter One, the Holy Spirit's distribution of spiritual gifts throughout the body of Christ needs attention in this regard. Even a cursory knowledge and review of this topic points to a fundamental understanding that echoes the Apostle Paul's writings: various talents and abilities are given supernaturally by the Holy Spirit to individuals within churches. These gifts are spread across a broad spectrum of people and are to be used to complete the mission of the Church and individual congregations. The point has been made previously from Ephesians 4 that these gifts are to help believers reach maturity in Christ so that they can be involved in the work of God's kingdom. There is an expectation that pastoral leaders will bring about the spiritual growth of individual Christians.

Within the context of hired professional staff, these gifts and abilities eventually lead to staff specialties that focus on specific tasks. Ministry generalists become ministry specialists as a church grows in numbers and programs. This is the model of the life-stories of those who populate the pages of the New Testament. For example, while it might be assumed that Jesus' disciples were initially generalists in ministry, even these early followers became ministry specialists once they matured in ministry. They may have been generalists when they started their three-year-ministry-in-training course with Jesus as they learned the broad outlines of ministry details during their

travel adventures with Jesus. He taught them the basics. Then after his death, burial, and resurrection Jesus passed the ministry baton to these disciples, these fledgling ministers. He left for heaven, sending the Holy Spirit to establish the Church, and suddenly the generalists discovered they needed to be ministry specialists.

These disciples grew into new roles. John became a theologian and writer who dug into the full meanings of the depth of Jesus' incarnation and God's love. John's theology then supported his examination of the intimate details of the days leading up to Jesus' murder. Each generation of believers who came after those early days of Christianity are indebted to John for his willingness to tackle the events that show both Jesus' agony and his hope for the future Church during those awful hours. Then, years later, John the theologian added the title *revelator* to his specialization resume in the later years of his life as he uncovered God's plans for the end of time.

Peter also moved from being a generalist to a ministry specialist. He became the first preacher and overt evangelist of the group (Acts 2). He then grew in his ministry specialization to become the de facto leader of the young Jerusalem congregation. Sometime later James, Jesus' half-brother, became a ministry specialist as he took over Peter's position. James became the lead pastor of the Jerusalem church.

Matthew used his knowledge of international law and customs to become a specialist writer. It should be recalled that Matthew was a tax collector prior to joining Jesus in ministry. That meant he would have regularly dealt with currencies and laws of both Jewish life and the Roman Empire. He would have known how to bring the two together for the sake of his fellow Jews. His profession required that he interpret the Roman law so that his Jewish countrymen would respond accordingly. In other words,

Matthew would have had a special interest in interpreting the events of the day through a Jewish lens. The gospel narrative that bears his name, consequently, is a specialized gospel written with the Jewish perspective in mind. Matthew became a ministry specialist.

This specialization in ministry is seen in other personalities of the New Testament who were not part of the original group of Jesus' disciples. For example, Luke paid attention to accuracy and detail in his biography of Jesus' life and the subsequent history of the Early Church. That detailed focus points to Luke's training as a physician. His writings show him to be a man of methodical precision. His moment-by-moment records of that time make him the primary historian of the Early Church. He was a ministry specialist.

The Apostle Paul's expertise in logic and law helped him to become Christianity's first apologist. There are scriptural examples where Paul used that training in rhetoric and logic to publicly argue an expert case for Christian thinking. Then as Paul accepted God's mission for his life, he became the most important missionary in the history of Christianity's spread across the globe. Even to this day, a viable argument can be made stating that the Church of today might not be flourishing as it is if Paul had not learned to be a missionary specialist.¹⁹

Training? Pay?

These examples show that professional help and staffing are needed in order for congregations to grow spiritually and numerically. Of course, the work of God is not limited to any one person or group of people who are validated by a fancy, framed

¹⁹ Of course the Holy Spirit would have moved into someone else's life causing the Church to develop. However, given the Church's history as it unfolded, the importance of Paul's work can never be dismissed.

sheepskin hung in a pastor's study. God can and does choose to work in and through all sorts of people. Lay people, unpaid professional staff, and even Balaam's donkey could be used to bring God's word to people. However, it seems viable that a fully-trained and humble professional staff person being used to lead and direct a church provides a greater opportunity for God's work to be successful.

Perhaps the issue is not where the training took place. Schooling does not necessarily mean that an educated person will be more productive in God's work. Plenty of people have attended bible school or seminary, and have successfully completed the academic requirements needed to receive a diploma for professional clergy life, yet they have not survived in the pastoral or church staff setting. Training in and of itself is not the criterion, but it is a helpful prerequisite.

The amount of pay received by a professional staff member is not the issue at stake here either. It can be assumed that the probability of successful ministry certainly increases if a professional staff person can work and minister unencumbered by the worry of how to support even a humble lifestyle. Admittedly, the Apostle Paul wrote about his bi-vocational career in both tent-making and ministry. And, of course, there are countless numbers of clergy who must support their ministry work through vocations outside of the church. However, it seems only reasonable and more likely to expect that someone whose undivided attention can be focused on the life of a congregation will be more successful in ministry work.

Old Testament Insights

At this point, this discussion about professionals in ministry has been limited to a brief review of patterns found in the New Testament. However, the story of God's work in human history goes beyond the New Testament. For example, are there

models and patterns within the Old Testament that point to individuals filling the professional ranks of ministry specialization?

It should be noted that there is a problem in pointing to the Old Testament for examples of the need for professional leadership in congregations: the Old Testament does not provide examples of Christian churches. Instead the narrative of the people and times of the Old Testament details the life of the people of Israel and their corporate national worship in settings far different than what is faced by a Christian congregation. The spirituality of the Old Testament is focused on the worship practices of the temple structure, and the decisions the nation faced about God-led morality. Consequently, while a warranted discussion is cited here about those who worked on the temple construction and those judges appointed by Moses in his effort to bring God's justice to the nation, care is required in pushing the comparisons between Old Testament settings and New Testament churches. The focus here is on the professional approach to the ministry tasks cited in the Old Testament recognizing there is a difference between the time periods of the Old and New Testaments and even the present day.

An Administrative Task and Model

Moses faced a daunting task when God called him into the leadership position of the people of Israel. He was responsible to muster ground-level support for God's plan of the people's release from slavery in Egypt. After their escape from Pharaoh and the Egyptian army through the towering walls of the waters of the Red Sea, Moses had to arrange for the people to move through the wilderness between the sea and the Land of Canaan. The process took forty years. Each move of God, as indicated by the cloud in the sky or the pillar of fire at night, meant organizing and orchestrating the

movement of a very large group of people. It is estimated the nation might have ranged in number from one to three million people. Packing and unpacking, feeding, and controlling a group that large must have required organizing skills and systems beyond imagination at times.

Moses had other responsibilities as well. Beyond the administrative tasks of keeping the nation moving, God was also unveiling the divine plan for Israel's worship practices and a legal system which in many ways still stands today. Then as he met God on Mount Sinai and learned about God's intent for the nation, Moses had to bring that learning to the nation. The ethos of the Israelites had to shift from one of down-trodden slavery to a national focus of corporate reliance on God and a hopeful anticipation of great things to come. They had to expect God to bring one miracle after another. The nation had to learn the dynamics of a faith walk with God. So Moses had to motivate, organize, teach, and lead. His job description seemed to have no conclusion.

Exodus 18 records Moses' frustration with all that was required of him. In a conversation with his father-in-law Jethro, Moses learned of his need to distribute the responsibilities before him. Jethro had watched as his son-in-law spent a whole day listening to the squabbles of one individual Israelite against another. Jethro was alarmed. Moses was listening to legal cases that did not really need the attention of the nation's top man. Jethro suggested Moses needed to delegate that responsibility to others saying, "If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain . . . " (*Exodus 18:23 NIV*). Moses listened to Jethro and developed a tiered system of judges and officials who handled the smaller legal cases leaving only the major decisions to Moses.

Is it possible that Jethro's advice to Moses about delegation can be applied to congregations and to the development of professional workers within the life of individual churches? Jerry Ward back at Orchard Street Community Church feels the strain of growing the congregation's ministry. Perhaps some delegation and the development of additional staff members can help ease that strain. After all, it worked for Moses.

While Pastor Jerry Ward might be able to handle all the pastoral needs at the present setting, shifting some of these responsibilities to other people would immediately multiply his ministry potential. He could add to the Base of Resources of Orchard Street Community Church as detailed in Chapter One. Like Moses' setting with the Israelites, each detail of the congregational life of Orchard Street does not need the top man's attention. Additionally, back within a New Testament understanding now, the Holy Spirit has given supernatural gifts to people who need places of ministry to use those gifts. Moses chose capable and trustworthy men (*Exodus 18:2*) to take over the intimate details of his larger role in national life. They must have been men with extra abilities in administration, leadership, and discernment. Ironically, those same abilities are found among the lists of supernatural gifts seen in the New Testament. Pastor Ward can increase his impact on the larger picture of congregational life by following this Old Testament pattern.

The Levitical Priesthood

In addition to Moses' pattern of administrative delegation, the Old Testament portrays a very specific ministry specialization, the Levitical Priesthood. Moses not only appointed specific people to act as his representative judges, he also appointed specific people to particular roles in ministry.

Moses had comprehensive God-given responsibilities regarding his leadership of the nation of Israel as they wandered through the Canaanite wilderness. He had to teach the people to think differently. They were no longer a nation of slaves beholden to the Egyptians. Instead, they were free people. This development of a national ethos included more than constructing a new tiered administrative system of judicial personnel per Jethro's observations. Moses had to teach his people how to be a nation that allowed God to be their supreme leader. They were to develop a theocracy, a legal system designed to be God-led. The Israelites were to enact and obey the laws as given by God to Moses. Their relationships with other nations were to be shaped by God's opinions of those inter-cultural exchanges. Some nations were to be tolerated, some to be seen as friendly, and others to be counted as enemies of the state.

Moses also had to develop a system for religious worship that accomplished two functions. First, it had to be pleasing to God. Israelites needed to know of God's expectations. Second, the worship practices of the nation also had to be user-friendly to the nation. People had to understand the worship system and then respond accordingly. Like the judicial system invented by Moses and Jethro as previously outlined, leading the people in worship was a project Moses could not accomplish alone. He needed help. In fact, while it was Moses' responsibility to describe and define the worship cult of Israel, God was quite clear regarding the limits of Moses' role in this part of national life. Moses' brother, Aaron, was appointed by God to be in charge of Israel's worship. This was not Moses' job.

Given this setting then, the present discussion about professional staffing in churches of today intersects with the Old Testament at this point.

Scripture clearly shows how God appointed various people to be involved in the

day-to-day details of Israel's worship. These people worked full-time in the traveling tabernacle during the early days of Israel's history, and then continued that full-time practice when the various structures of the permanent temple were constructed. These employees filled a variety of roles and job descriptions. They were ministry specialists. Some were musicians, some were artisans or craftsman responsible for the worship structures, and some held administrative positions. For the most part they were all part of the Tribe of Levi, assigned to Aaron as his extended work force. All subsequent generations of Levi were expected to fill this role. The Levite family/tribe grew exponentially in years after the early days of leaving Egypt. Eventually, when the numbers of men available grew beyond the responsibilities of the Temple, the men of the family were assigned to their priestly duties on a rotating basis.²⁰

This family of Levites was treated differently as compared to other tribal families within the nation. They could not be conscripted as soldiers for Israel's army. At times their diet was different from the rest of the nation. They were not always included in a national census, or at least the counting of Levites received special treatment. Their sources of personal income came from gifts given by people to the tabernacle and/or temple treasury. In other words, Levites were set apart as professional worship workers. God viewed their role as completely separate from what others in the nation could or should do, as an example from Numbers shows:

Whenever the tabernacle is to move, the Levites are to take it down, and whenever the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall do it. Anyone else who goes near it shall be put to death. The Israelites are to set up their tents by division, each man in his own camp under his own standard. The Levites, however, are to set up their tents around the

²⁰ Not all temple workers belonged to Aaron's family, but these non-Levi tribe workers were more of an exception to the general practice of tabernacle and temple workers coming from one family blood line.

See: R. K. Harrison. *Numbers: The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary*, (Chicago, IL: The Moody Bible Institute, 1990), 49, or Judges 17:5.

tabernacle of the Testimony so that wrath will not fall on the Israelite community. The Levites are to be responsible for the care of the tabernacle of the Testimony.

Numbers 1:51-53 (NIV)

It is obvious the Levites were different than anyone else in the nation. They were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the nation's holiness. This job description included helping keep anyone from inadvertently wandering onto the tabernacle property while in an unclean state and, thus, inviting a capital sentence coming from the wrath of God. No one else could do their job without special God-given permission.

The men of this Levitical family knew of their important and unique role in the nation from the time they were young boys. Numbers narrates an episode pointing to this issue. As previously mentioned, when Moses conducted a census he kept a tally of the Levi tribe separate from the rest of the nation. This unique approach was stressed because they were not only counted separately, but twice, both as infants and later as adults when they become available for service in the tabernacle (*Numbers 1:47-49, 2:33, 4:34-49*). A special record was kept in a separate census of any Levite boy of one month or older. And as they grew, each boy knew he would have a unique part to play in the nation's worship of God.²¹ He was to be a professional worshiper. He was to be a ministry specialist.

The Old Testament patterns of leadership then fit in with the patterns of leadership in the New Testament. Israel's theocratic model of national administration and legal system had specific individuals who were appointed to be used by God in that function. Additionally, the Levites acted as professional leaders and employees of

²¹ Raymond Brown, *The Message of Numbers: Journey to the Promised Land*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 37-38.

the tabernacle and temple.

The New Testament pattern also shows that some individuals were set apart by God for professional ministry through the use of their spiritual gifts. The New Testament Church had ministry specialists who took on special roles of ministry as warranted by the needs of individual congregations.

Congregations today can expect the Holy Spirit to give real tasks to individuals with leadership and teaching abilities. It should not be expected that one person alone can perform all the duties required by a congregation. At some point as churches grow, particularly numerically, then additional staff has to be hired. That hiring has to fit the ministry specialization gifts of the individual along with the explicit needs of the congregation.

CHAPTER THREE

SOME NOT-SO-LIGHT READING

Pastor Ward has a challenge ahead. He is beginning to sense that a day is coming when his congregation will need to change. He will be asking Orchard Street Community Church to operate in new ways and to accept new models of ministry. He wonders if the task will be more of a challenge than he can handle.

It is difficult to change the operational ethos of an established church with a significant number of years of ministry in its history like Orchard Street Community Church. The methods used to facilitate change are complex, and a high level of energy is required of the church's leadership teams. Patterns and habits have been in operation for many years, and some may need to be challenged. It is fair to say those congregational routines were probably instituted years ago with some important goal in mind. There are reasons why Orchard Street does this or that in such precise ways. However, it is now feasible that members of the church have long forgotten why the organ is always on the right side of the sanctuary. For that matter, why do they even use an organ in worship? Would removing it from its place in worship cause a struggle in the church's membership? Why are elders' meetings held on every second Tuesday night of each month? No one can recall why Mildred Waggoner has to be consulted before anyone can use the church kitchen, but it is an unwritten rule that has to be obeyed. The Sunday bulletins are always prepared and copied on Thursday afternoons. Jerry would like to prepare them earlier in the week so he had to prepare

his weekly sermon on Thursdays, but seemingly some customs cannot be changed.

These sorts of patterns are difficult to challenge and/or change in a congregation the size of Orchard Street Community Church. That is a small understatement of the problem that lies before Jerry Ward. Understanding the customs and traditions is one challenge. Changing these patterns is even more difficult. Most, if not all congregations of long standing, have uncontested routines that ceased to be effective long ago.

They are not as prevalent in newer and younger congregations where the brief period of time in ministry and the lack of situational settings have not yet forced those congregations to establish a lot of written or unwritten rules. Newer congregations can often be more nimble in making changes because little of their congregational life has become tradition and, thus, they can be more open to change.²²

Pastor Ward is serving a long-standing congregation. The people of his church have seen a number of pastors come and go. From the perspective of the people, some of those pastorates were successful, but some were downright disastrous and miserable. This has taught the people some lessons and they are used to conducting their business, namely ministry, in particular ways. That approach flows from members' expectations to stay in the community for years while anticipating that individual pastors will come and go. That commitment to membership stability has proven to be successful. Orchard Street Community Church has survived this coming and going of clergy. While the peculiar gifts and abilities of Jerry's pastoral leadership are appreciated and desired, the people expect a day will come when he will move onto

²² Of course, these are rather broad generalizations under discussion, and examples to the contrary are available. However, the point under discussion here bears examination, simply in light of its overall truth.

another congregation, and they will be responsible to see that the church's mission carries on. They will accept a certain number of changes that reflect his personality and talents; however, buying into a whole new model of ministry is a different matter. A new ministry model for Orchard Street will only be accepted if the congregation is certain they can trust Jerry for their long-term future. If Jerry wants to move the congregation from being an average church in an average city, then he will have to challenge the status quo. He has a large task in front of him.

The previous chapter outlined some of the biblical and theological rationale for bringing about a change like this. That theology needs to be taught to the congregation in regards to the new staffing model that Jerry would like to propose. The church's leadership teams will also need to be engaged in a serious study of the topic at hand. At the least, if Jerry wants the church to accept his new ideas, he would be wise to allow the church's leadership to study and wrestle through the changes together with him. A decision by pastoral fiat would not be effective. The leadership teams of the church will need to learn of some ministry models where a new staffing paradigm has worked. They will want real life examples. Some of the study materials that might be helpful are discussed below.²³

JIM COLLINS

As mentioned previously, Jim Collins' book, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . And Others Don't*, created quite a stir in the business community when it was released in 2001. Collins' research of 1,435 Fortune 500 companies indicated that only eleven of those businesses could be considered great.

²³ There seems to be little literature devoted primarily to staffing churches, particularly as it relates to staffing church for spiritual and numerical growth. Some works focus solely on numerical growth and staffing, while few deal with spirituality and staffing issues at all. The works reviewed were chosen since they can form the basis of understanding some of the dynamics of various staffing models.

There were many good companies, but very few great enterprises. Collins and his research team evaluated these eleven companies looking for common denominators that might point to their individual successes. They found seven such factors in each company, two of which apply to this study centered on staffing decisions:

- Companies become great when they hire CEOs who have a sense of personal humility combined with professional tenacity.
- These CEOs then release poorly-performing employees and replace them with talented people who help set the vision and direction for the company. Ironically, the vision for the company is not set prior to the arrival of the employees, but rather after these new people are in place. Together with the CEO they take on ideas and projects where success can be expected.

Both of these points bear some discussion.

Personal Humility and Tenacity

Collins was shocked to discover that two traits, personal humility and professional tenacity, were common in what he calls **Level 5** leaders. Level 5 leaders are men and women who have led their companies from being an average or good company to become a great company. They were able to do what Pastor Jerry Ward envisions. He wants to move his church from being an average church in an average city. These secular leaders moved their companies far away from being simply average. Their businesses are not found in the middle of the bell curve of mediocre to excellent corporations. They are found on the far end of that bell curve and form a small and elite group of great companies. Collins says these Level 5 leaders build:

. . . enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal

*humility and professional will . . . Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious – **but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves.***²⁴ *(emphasis in original)*

Collins indicates that he did not expect to discover this emphasis on the personality of the leader and his or her character. In fact, he pushed his research team to move away from examining the role of each company's top leader. He planned a bias that moved away from any notion of popular culture that says, "It all rises and falls on leadership." That approach did not work because the research showed Collins did have to review the role of leaders after all. It became apparent that in many ways, the success of his eleven great companies did rise and fall on leadership, but not in the way it would be expected. Exemplary leadership was not based on a strong dominant ego. Collins was shocked to learn the most successful leaders had personalities that focused on humility and tenacity.

It seems ironic that Collins identified these two components of successful leaders in light of the present study. Collins' research centers on a secular topic, yet he identified two traits that are very biblical in nature. Collins' conclusions about humility and tenacity could be reading material for Christians, yet he wrote with a secular audience in mind. Mature Christians are called to be humble. Scripture states:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition, or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)

This Philippians passage then goes on to give the supreme example of the humility Christians are called to emulate. It describes how Jesus gave up his divine

²⁴ Collins, *Good to Great*, 20, 21.

place in heaven and became a servant in the form of a human. He took on an attitude of humility, and Christians are expected to do likewise.

Scripture not only calls mature believers to humility, but the willingness to “stay-the-course” in Christian life is also a biblical mandate. The Apostle Paul and other New Testament writers repeatedly called for listeners to take on a task and carry it to completion. Each of the following passages has a similar motif. Paul expects responsible Christians to accept their mission and to hold onto it with tenacity. The Hebrews’ writer expects followers of Christ to approach their ministry and/or life as a race that must be run to the finish line. No one gets to stop at the halfway mark:

. . . continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.

Philippians 2:12-16 (NIV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV)

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules.

I give you this charge Preach the Word; be prepared in season

and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

2 Timothy 2:1-5, 4:1-5 (NIV)

Paul even points to his own life as an example of tenacity. He did not expect to live one way and tell his converts and students to live in a different way. He acknowledged that as he had learned to persevere, to be tenacious in handling his responsibilities, so they had to follow him. As his life was drawing to a close he wrote to Timothy stating:

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings – what kind of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 3:10-11, 4:7 (NIV)

Pastor Ward back at Orchard Street Community Church will need to show his congregation that he is both humble and tenacious. This will help build the trust he needs in the eyes of his congregation in order to initiate the staffing changes he has in mind. In the future, Jerry will also need to examine the personality traits of those hired by the congregation as additional professional staff. This is the case because if a typical Christian is called to be both humble and tenacious, then professional leaders in the church must demonstrate these traits to an even greater degree. If humility and tenacity are the identifiable and most commendable traits of the best leaders available in the secular marketplace, then professional leaders in the church must take note.

These leaders must lead the charge in both humility and tenacity. They are called to double duty, to a higher standard in their lifestyles and willingness to “keep on keeping on.” The Apostle James pointed this out when he stated:

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

James 3:1 (NIV)

In short, the patterns of the New Testament call for believers to be both humble and tenacious. This is the call for all Christians and particularly more so in the lives of those in leadership. There is no viable alternative. Collins’ research discovered the same qualities in the most successful leaders in his secular study. Summarizing these traits of humility and tenacity Collins states that the best professional leaders:

*. . . display a compelling modesty, are self-effacing and understated. In contrast, two-thirds of the comparison companies had leaders with gargantuan personal egos that contributed to the demise or continued mediocrity of the company.*²⁵

. . . are fanatically driven, infected with an incurable need to produce sustained results. They are resolved to do whatever it takes to make the company great, no matter how big or hard the decisions.

*. . . display a workmanlike diligence – more plow horse than show horse.*²⁶

People Before Vision

As mentioned, Collins identified eleven leaders who led their companies to become great. He was shocked to learn how the personal character traits of those leaders impacted their companies so powerfully. This was one surprising outcome of his study as it relates to professional staffing. Collins and his research team uncovered

²⁵ It should be noted that part of Collins’ study involved looking at comparable companies for each of the eleven great companies chosen.

²⁶ Collins, *Good to Great*, 39.

another bombshell. He discovered that while a corporation's vision had to be compelling, that mission was established after the right people were hired. Collins states it this way:

*The executives who ignited the transformations from good to great did not first figure out where to drive the bus and then get the people to take it there. No, they first got the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) and then figured out where to drive it. They said, in essence, "Look, I don't really know where we should take this bus. But I know this much: if we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we'll figure out how to take it someplace great."*²⁷

At first glance this appears to be counter-intuitive. After all, it is assumed people want to follow a leader who has a great vision. They will sign on to be part of that great vision. Collins' research points in another direction, at least as vision applies to successful marketplace strategies. The evidence showed successful companies first find the right people and place them in the right staffing position. Only then should the leadership begin to define direction and vision. This is important because problems can develop if people agree to be part of a company's workforce based on vision alone. The present business climate calls for companies to be very nimble when responding to market forces. Commercial enterprises need to be able to change direction. Perhaps the vision even needs to shift over time. If staff members sign on to one particular vision alone, then significant problems can develop when market forces cause a shift in a company's direction. Collins' research showed that the most successful companies first hire competent people and put them in employment positions that reflect each individual's abilities and passions. Then, as a team, they discern a compelling vision and move toward it together.

This has implications for local congregations in settings like Orchard Street

²⁷ Ibid., 41.

Community Church. Churches often challenge their pastors to discover and define the Holy Spirit's compelling vision for the future. A typical scene like this could be as follows: a church hires a new senior leader/pastor who is expected to arrive and quickly discover and announce a vision. Statements including, "where there is no vision, the people perish," are bantered about without much thought. The pastor steps into that challenge, usually not fully aware of the church's full gifts and abilities and history. Then, as the ensuing vision is announced, the congregation chooses, informally or perhaps even formally through a voting process, to either accept or reject the new vision. This model is ripe for disaster. What if the new vision is not acceptable to the people? Does this mean the pastor did not hear the voice of God correctly? If he or she did not hear from God regarding the future vision, then how can church members be certain the pastor is hearing from God in regards to preaching topics, or to Christian education plans, or to the financial aspects of church life? If a church relationship with the pastor is based on trust, then this model leaves room for the demise of that trust.

Perhaps Collins' research would point out another model of discovering a congregation's vision. Is it possible God's vision for a congregation should be more organic in its development? Perhaps it should not come as some pronouncement from the senior pastor alone, but instead be discovered through a deeper and longer process of discernment. The senior pastor should certainly lead the charge, but a congregation's reliance on him or her alone might be suspect.

If this is the case, then Collins' work would push Jerry Ward and Orchard Street Community Church in a new direction. Pastor Ward must help his church members find the right employees and then place them in staff positions that will have a kingdom impact. Then, as the spiritual gifts and vocational abilities of these new staff members

become evident, and as it is discovered how they mesh with the congregation's strengths, then God's vision would be clearer. In the model of Collins' language this really would be a case of getting the right people in the right seats of the bus, and then deciding where the bus should go.²⁸

THOM S. RAINER

Collins' book was not only the focus of study in many business settings; it created a stir in places within the Christian world as well, particularly because of its focus on humility, a true Christian virtue. Collins did not discuss humility from a Christian viewpoint, but some within the Christian culture wondered about the implications of his secular analysis. One Christian who read Collins' findings was Thom Rainer, who is presently the President of the Southern Baptist Convention's publishing house. Like many Christians who are culture watchers, Rainer read Collins' *Good to Great* with some questions in mind. Would empirical evidence in the US Church sustain Collins' observations about the secular market place? What lessons cross over from the secular world that could inform local congregations in their endeavors? Is there a select group of churches that mirrors the eleven great companies identified by Collins? Have these churches moved from average and mediocre ministry into powerful kingdom impact? If so, what traits are common in this group?

Zondervan Publishing engaged Rainer in a project designed to answer these and similar questions. The intent was to conduct a study using a similar protocol as found in Collins' work. For example, as in Collins' study, a research team was formed to assemble data and form conclusions. This time, however, the information was to

²⁸ Of course, Collins also wanted the wrong people off the bus as well. The implications of that idea are extremely difficult in church life as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

come from local churches, not business enterprises.

Rainier's team gained access to data from more than fifty thousand churches across the United States. They looked for churches that were far from average. They were searching for great churches with ministries that went beyond the norm. The results are both disturbing and shocking. After establishing various criteria in regards to kingdom impact, and reviewing fifty thousand congregations, Rainier's group found only thirteen great churches! His results are found in his book, *Breakout Churches: Discovering How to Make the Leap*.

Rainier is quite emphatic in declaring that his discoveries cannot be forced into a compartmentalized formula that says, "Do this, followed by that, and then quickly this, will all add up to a great church." He acknowledges that church life and kingdom impact are directed by the non-empirical work of the Holy Spirit. That cannot be measured. Nonetheless, the researchers were able to identify some common factors found in all thirteen great churches that point to "how" God is working.²⁹ Two of those six commonalities relate to this study on professional staffing in local congregations.

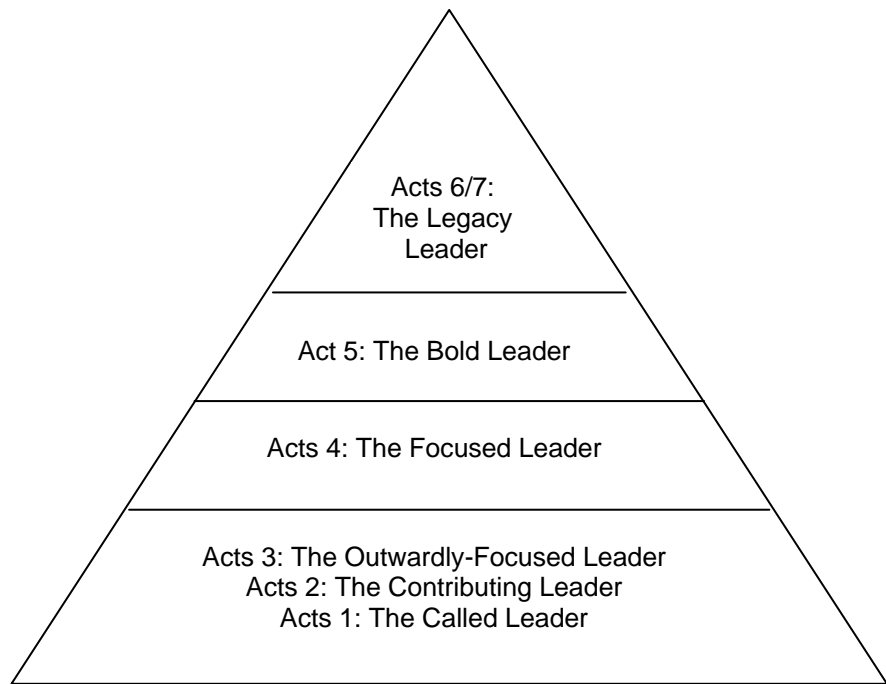
Acts 6/7 Leadership

Rainer asks questions based on Collins' work regarding leadership traits, particularly as they apply to pastoral leadership. While Collins points to Level 5 leaders, Rainer coins a new term to describe exemplary pastoral leaders: **Acts 6/7 Leadership**. This term relates to the nature of the leadership tasks required of the early apostles in the Book of Acts as seen in the diagram on the following page.³⁰

²⁹ Rainer, *Breakout Churches*, 27.

³⁰ Ibid., 41.

Rainer
has determined
that very few
church leaders
reach this level.
His research
shows that less
than one percent
of church pastors
become Acts 6/7
leaders. He sees
the need for



Ascending Leadership Scale

many more of these exemplary leaders because eight of ten churches in the United States are declining, or have reached a plateau, and are in desperate need of competent leadership.³¹ Acts 6/7 leaders are admired and needed in these churches because these leaders are, “. . . quick to give ministry to others and let them take credit for their work . . . not merely concerned about the church during their lifetime. They seek to make decisions that will benefit the church after they are gone.”³²

In this way Rainer’s research results mirror Collins’. Those who rise to stellar leadership in the church and/or business community are few and far between. Like Level 5 leaders in Collins’ work, Acts 6/7 leaders in Rainer’s study need both humility and tenacity. For example, in regards to tenacity Rainer details the story of Stephen

³¹ Ibid., 45.

³² Ibid., 44.

Schwanbach, Senior Pastor of Bethel Temple Community Church in Evansville, Indiana. Schwanbach inherited the role of pastor from his father, who held the title for thirty years. The transition from father to son in 1981 did not go well at all. The first ten years in the son's ministry saw results that were far less than stellar. Church members were not pleased with Schwanbach's leadership patterns or his plans for the church. Membership dwindled. Then in 1993, Schwanbach had a spiritual epiphany in which he sensed new divine direction for the future. It took another decade of work before the power of that epiphany played out in its entirety and the church began to grow. Schwanbach had to be tenacious and, in humility, accept twenty years of "sluggin'-it-out" ministry before he saw the results he had expected. Schwanbach's humility and tenacity indicate he should be considered an Acts 6/7 leader.

Rainer then has the following conclusions regarding Acts 6/7 leaders. Remarkably, his findings mirror Collins' discoveries:

Acts 6/7 leaders tend to accept slow progress. They are sensitive to criticism, but they do not let their critics deter them from the goals and visions they sense God has given them.

*We found no autocratic leaders in the breakout churches. While they were strong leaders, their humility precluded them from being dictatorial leaders. Yet some of these leaders admitted being autocratic in the past. One of the major transformations that took place in their lives personally was the move away from dictatorial leadership.*³³

These understandings are crucial to know as background material for Rainer's other discovery impacting this present study. In *Good to Great*, Collins wrote about making the best staffing decision. He learned that putting the right people in the right seats on the bus was where important staffing decisions were made. The key to successful secular staffing was not discovering a compelling, over-arching vision that

³³ Ibid., 51.

everyone agreed to ahead of time. Instead, finding talented and committed people was the first priority. Rainer had similar results in his research findings.

Who?

If Pastor Ward back at Orchard Street Community Church can convince his congregation to move aggressively into its future with major changes, with a renewed theological structure and a decision to extend its base of resources, then adding professional staff will be one of his major tasks. Rainer's research results are helpful in this matter. He discovered that breakout churches often look for the best people, hire them as employees, and then create ministry and job descriptions where these new people can be used best. Rainer states, "It typically does not take long before that capable and motivated person is making a difference in the church using his or her God-given gifts and abilities."³⁴ This has noteworthy implications for Pastor Ward and all churches interested in adding to their professional staff. Congregational leaders must hire the best people possible and then create job descriptions that fit the new employees' abilities. There are some obvious caveats in this though. For example, if a church is in need of a worship and music leader, hiring the best person would dictate he or she would be talented and trained in music leadership. Rainer's findings indicate that in this case a church should search for the best music person possible with leadership skills, and then allow him or her to build the worship department over time. The leadership of the Holy Spirit would provide a vision for the department that best follows God's plan and the new employee's abilities. The church would have to be willing to allow the ministry to develop gradually. The opposite approach - finding the best candidate and forcing him or her into a binding job description - would be very

³⁴ Ibid., 92.

problematic. Much tension would be found on all sides. The staff person's tenure will most likely be fairly short, and all will suffer.

So in a nutshell, Rainer and Collins agree. Both their studies agree, one in a secular, and one in a Christian culture and church setting. Churches should do this: find professional employees who are both humble and tenacious. Then, allow the vision of the church and the new employee's vision to mesh and grow over time. That will be the best God-given vision for each individual congregation. Find the right people and put them in the right seats on the bus, before turning the ignition key on the bus and beginning the journey of ministry.

GARY L. McINTOSH

Gary McIntosh is a well-known church analyst and professor of Christian Ministry at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, located in California. He is known for his books that relate to church life and ministry organization. McIntosh presents a model for church staffing in his book, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century*. It speaks directly to the present discussion about staffing for spiritual and numerical growth for all churches.

McIntosh's model begins with a staffing paradigm and program for a new church plant. Only a small percentage of the churches in the United States are church plants. Most churches are established congregations where a succession of pastoral and program staff have come and gone. Nonetheless, McIntosh's observations warrant some review.

McIntosh begins with the following statement:

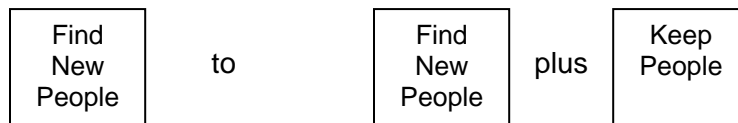
Observers of growing churches find that the best years of a church's numerical growth are often the first fifteen to twenty years of its existence. Stated another way, the fastest growing churches are new

*churches. While there are several reasons why newer churches grow faster than older ones, part of the reason is directly related to priorities.*³⁵

With this in mind McIntosh observes that a church-planting pastor has one major priority in the early planting phase. That pastor must find people:

*Since the new pastor has no people to care for, no program to administer, and no worship service to lead, all his energy, prayer, and effort are directed toward finding new people. With this focus on evangelism, is it any mystery that newer churches do the best job of evangelizing people? If the church-planting pastor and his core group do not win new people to Christ, the new church will not get off the ground. Thus the first priority of the new church is evangelism.*³⁶

This seems obvious. If the pastor is successful, the church will grow in numbers. However, once new people are in place, the pastor now has an added responsibility, and this is where the real pastoral difficulties can begin. Those now in this new church no longer need to be found. Now they need to be led into the truths of Christian lifestyle and thought. Now the not-so-new pastor has two responsibilities, evangelism (finding even more new people) and discipleship training for those who are no longer quite as new to the church. McIntosh points out that the pastor's workload has changed from:



As this church grows, becoming older and more established, the pastor's responsibilities grow as well. Worship services become important and draw the pastor's focused energy, helping to build a bond in the new faith community. Then those in the new community soon want education for adults and their children. Polity decisions have to be made, and the whole growth process culminates in the pastor's

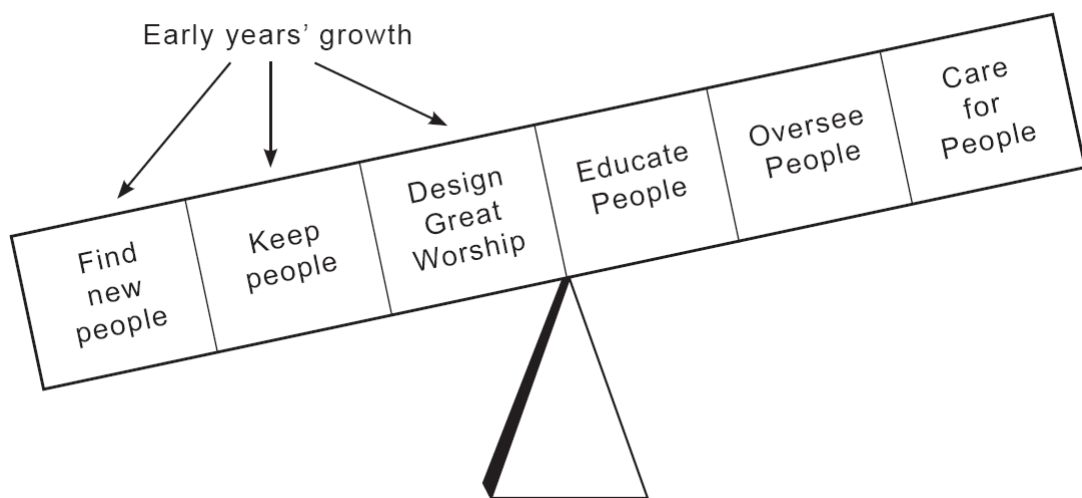
³⁵ Gary L. McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Ministry in the 21st Century*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 21.

³⁶ Ibid., 21.

responsibility to care for those in the church. McIntosh's diagrams now show how the pastor's workload has increased to look like the following:

Find New People	Keep People	Design Great Worship	Educate People	Oversee People	Care for People
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There are only so many hours within each day, so in order to maintain the church's programs and to keep people from leaving, the pastor's priorities have to be shifted, to the point that finding new people is no longer at the top of the daily list of responsibilities. Evangelism has taken a back seat. Now McIntosh's diagram points out that evangelism is no longer at the center of the pastor's attention.

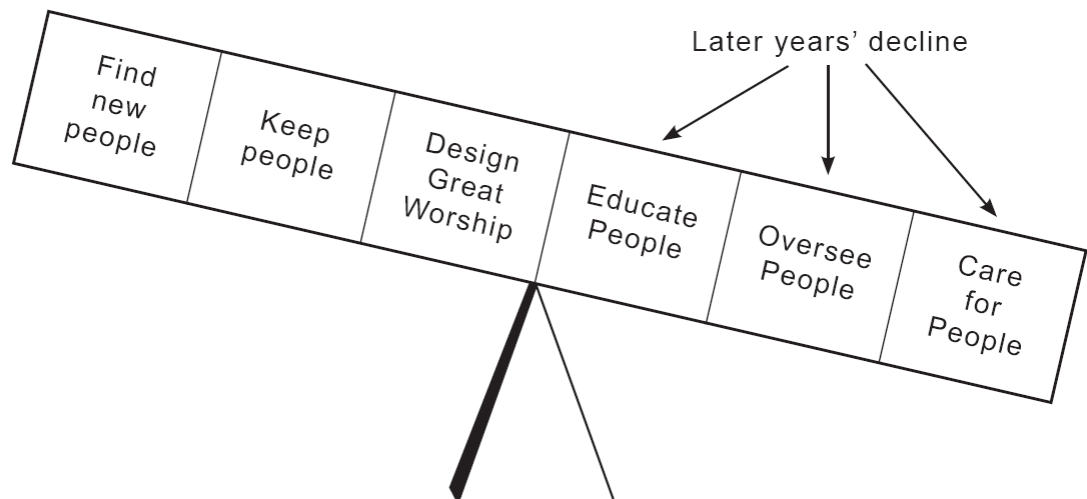


McIntosh states it this way:

Part of the reason a new church grows is the emphasis it places on finding new people, keeping them, and celebrating with them in worship. As the years go by and more people, programs, and facilities are added, the priorities move to pastoral care, church administration, and education to the point that the earlier priorities are either diminished or totally abandoned. Thus the church leaders and members move into a maintenance mode, taking care of what they have (people, programs,

facilities) while abandoning the priorities that got them there (outreach, assimilation, and worship).³⁷

In other words, the congregation is weighed down as a shift has occurred in the church's focus. It is eventually dragged into decline, for no other reason than no one is paying attention to front-door evangelism. Church members receive care. The in-house ministry is very credible and effective. All seems well because everyone seems content and happy with their needs being known and met. As was mentioned in the description of Orchard Street Community Church, the now-established church knows how to conduct a great funeral. There is great care extended from one person to the next in the life of the church. The following diagrams show where the pastor is focusing attention and the resulting shift in the church's priorities as compared to the church's early days. The congregation's members may not formally say this is where they intend to focus, but it is the reality of many churches. They speak about wanting to see new people in the door, about bringing converts to Christ, but it rarely happens because their focus is on the ongoing "in-house" ministries." The church is out of balance.



³⁷ Ibid., 24.

McIntosh suggests this established church, which is now long past its church-plant mentality, has to bring balance to his fulcrums shown above. Since the priorities of the later years are still very important, they cannot be dismissed. Yet the priorities of the earlier years also need new development and focus. The church-plant pastor has to be released to return to the task of finding new people. In that case, a new staff member is needed to tend to the ministry needs of those already in the church. Another solution is to leave the church-plant pastor in charge of the present members of the church, while hiring a new staff member to focus on finding new people. Regardless of the approach, a new staff member is needed. Adding this person will ensure the continued care and growth of those in the church while growing the church numerically by focusing on new people. The congregation has to return to a focus on its ministry on the left side of the fulcrum. The ministries and responsibilities of the right side cannot be abandoned, but they must not preclude the attention that is need on the left side.

In many ways this returns to the discussion of Chapter One regarding the extension of a church's base of resources. If Orchard Street Community Church could follow McIntosh's model of staffing, they would add to their base of resources. The congregation is long past the early days of its history when finding new people was the core of its ministry. They have moved to the right-hand side of McIntosh's fulcrum, where maintenance outweighs numerical growth. They might be growing in spirituality as Pastor Ward teaches, but their numerical growth and evangelistic kingdom impact is virtually non-existent. By adding a new staff member, they can extend their base of resources and focus on a more balanced approach to ministry. An assessment of Pastor Jerry's gifts would give Orchard Street two options. If he excels in evangelism efforts, the church can hire a professional to take care of the right side of the fulcrum,

ministry focused on those already in the church. However, if Pastor Ward's ministry gifts work best in discipleship and training, then a new professional can be added to the left side of the fulcrum. Evangelism and front-door efforts will then be the focus of the new staff member's responsibilities. Either option enhances the congregation's training in spirituality while increasing the likelihood of numerical growth. Orchard Street Community Church will grow in discipleship and numbers.

OK, We'll Hire, But When?

To this point in this chapter the discussion has focused on the need for new staff in a congregation like Orchard Street Community Church. This is one way the church can add to its base of resources. Extending that base will support the congregation's growth in numbers and spirituality. If the congregation's examination of scripture and additional contemporary literature convinces them to move in this direction, church members will still face a difficult decision. This decision is before them, even if they agree to ask Pastor Ward to focus on one side of McIntosh's fulcrum while hiring a new professional to stress the opposite side. If Orchard Street Community chooses to hire someone with Collins' and Rainer's idea in mind - that the right person is more important than the specific position - they will still face a difficult decision. They will need to answer this question: When will we hire this new professional?

McIntosh acknowledges that there have been a variety of staff ratios used over many years when deciding how many pastoral staff members are needed in various sized congregations. Going back to the early and mid-sixties, various writers recommended one pastor for every three hundred fifty to five hundred members. That is a high ratio that was possible in days gone by when lay involvement was high and

congregations were homogeneous in nature.³⁸ Those days are long gone. Across the board, life is much more complicated than forty years ago, and particularly in church settings.

In 1980, Lyle Schaller suggested a new way to think of pastor-to-member ratios. Since different congregations and denominations had so many varying membership-counting methods, he recommended that church leaders look at a ratio showing average worship attendance to pastor figures. In that light then, he recommended the following:

Professional Staff Positions per Schaller (1980)

Average Worship Attendance	Full-Time Program Staff Members
200	1
300	2
400	3
500	4
600	5
700	6
800	7
900	7 or 8 ³⁹

McIntosh agrees with Schaller indicating this would be a good practice; however, he issues a caution in regards to the costs of this ratio. It seems few churches could afford this pattern of pastoral staff, particularly when additional office and support personnel would be required and need compensation as well. ⁴⁰ Consequently, a decision to add staff in this setting then quickly becomes a decision about budgets alone. That is not good news since budgets and funding should not be

³⁸ Ibid., 38-38.

³⁹ Lyle E. Schaller, *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1980), 59.

⁴⁰ Of course, the introduction of computers into church life has changed the ratio of pastors-to-secretaries in recent years. See the box on the top of page 73.

the sole criteria used to determine the Holy Spirit's plan for individual congregations. What if God is calling a congregation to extend its Base of Resources before the full funding is available? McIntosh suggests a new ratio for churches today facing the challenge of limited resources, a ratio of 1:150, based on average worship attendance:

Professional Staff Positions per McIntosh

Average Worship Attendance	Full-Time Program Staff Members
150	1
300	2
450	3
600	4
750	5
900	6 ⁴¹

There is a caveat in place here regarding McIntosh's new ratio if Orchard Street Community Church were to accept this ratio; Pastor Ward and his members must act before a personnel need arises, not afterwards. In other words, they must hire their second professional in order to reach three hundred in worship attendance, not after. In fact, as McIntosh points out, the table shown above really operates in the following manner:

Professional Staff Positions and Size Potential

Full-Time Staff Position	Increases Church Size to . . .
1 pastor	150 people
1 + 1 pastor	300
2 + 1	450
3 + 1	600
4 + 1	750
5 + 1	900 ⁴²

⁴¹ McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth*, 40.

⁴² Ibid., 42.

This venture of adding new professional staff can be costly for both smaller and larger churches. Lyle Schaller reports that the cost of staffing for growth in churches of these sizes can account for up to sixty percent of a congregation's budget.⁴³ Even adding only one new professional staff member to the employee team in a church like Orchard Street Community Church will be more cost prohibitive than adding the same person to a large congregation. The smaller church would experience almost a one hundred percent increase in pastoral and/or program salaries, while the percentage increase in a larger church will obviously be smaller. Nonetheless, any size church wishing to extent its base of resources must count the cost of additional staff and proceed accordingly.⁴⁴

This study does not explicitly deal with support personnel in regards to a church's hiring practices. Nonetheless, McIntosh suggests the following as a beginning guideline:

Full-Time Program Staff	Support Staff
1	1
2	1.5
3	2
4	2.5
5	3
6	3.5

This would support a church up to the size of 900 as listed on the previous page.

ALICE MANN: IF WE ADD STAFF, WILL WE HAVE TO CHANGE?

*Growing churches face a dilemma. They don't have enough households to fully support a new staff person, but they will never gain those households without additional staff energy. In general, a church must staff somewhat ahead of the immediate need in order to keep growing.*⁴⁵

This statement by Alice Mann in her book, *The In-Between Church: Navigating*

⁴³ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁴ In some very large churches staffing costs may reach as high as seventy percent, due to a large congregation's focus on programs and group activities/ministries, all of which can be too large and time consuming for volunteer leadership alone. Mid-size churches can often keep their staffing costs to below forty-five percent.

⁴⁵ Alice Mann, *The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations*, (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1998), 57.

Size Transitions in Congregations, echoes the thoughts expressed to date. Churches must plan for adding staff if they want to grow in spirituality and/or numerical size.

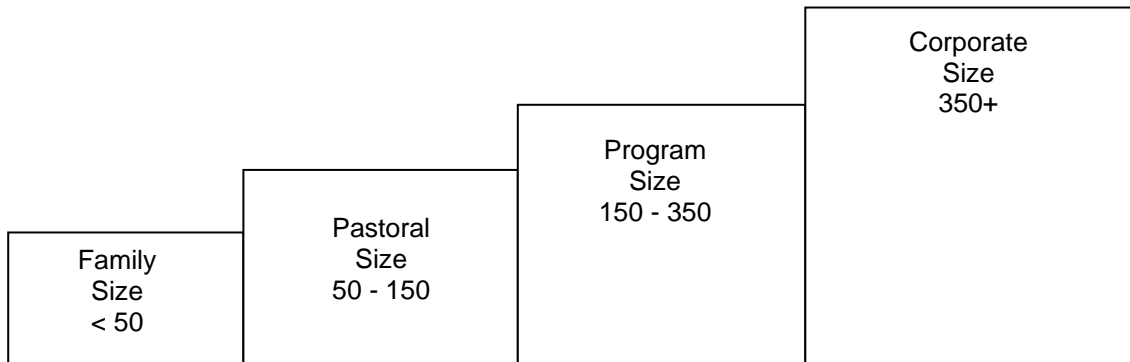
While that might easily be the stated purpose of many congregations, the actual process of adding staff is far less easy. In fact, it is often rather complicated and fraught with danger in regards to potential congregational conflict and change. Bringing new professional staff into the life of a congregation means new leadership issues will come into play, and the lines of authority will shift. If the new staff member's ministry does cause the church to grow numerically, then the balance of power within the pews will be modified also. The church will change.

Therein lays the difficulty. Change within congregations requires diligence, hard work, and attitudes of compromise on the part of all in the church. When change comes along, there are ample opportunities for relational struggles and conflict. And this change works differently for various sized congregations.

Alice Mann deals with the transitions congregations face as they move from one size to another. She bases her study on work originally set forth by Arlin Rothauge in, *Sizing Up a Congregation for New Member Ministry*.⁴⁶ Rothauge examined different sized congregations, looking for common dynamics within churches of similar size. He discovered there are basically four different sized churches, each with their own unique settings of ministry. In other words, there are ideas, challenges and bright spots common in all congregations of the four sizes of churches. These dynamics are the same for all churches of the same size category. The size of the church then can determine its ministry potential more so than its denominational setting, history, personnel, and other characteristics. The four different sized churches as defined by

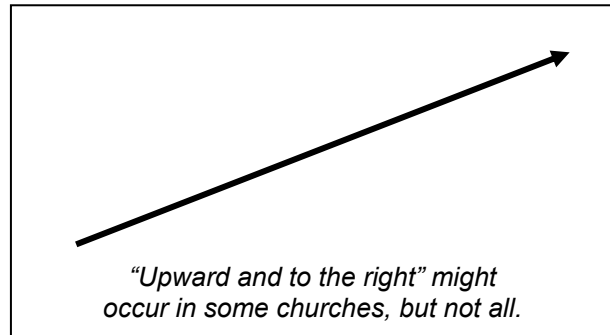
⁴⁶ Arlin Rothauge, *Sizing up a Congregation for New Member Ministry*, (New York, NY: Episcopal Church Center, undated). Available from Episcopal Parish Services, 800-903-5544.

Rothauge are shown below. (The numbers refer to average worship attendance.)



Mann says church growth can sometimes grow along a steady upward slope, as commonly stated, “Upward and to the right.” However, some churches might also experience church growth in jumps and plateaus, with stops and starts in-between growth spurts. In these cases, growth patterns would appear more along the pattern as shown in Rothauge’s boxes as seen above.

However, Mann shows growing congregations must change and adapt regardless of their growth patterns, whether the growth is in stops and starts or in a continual



upward line. For example, congregational life in a family-sized church will be significantly different from a pastoral-sized church, which will in-turn be different than in a program-sized church, and so forth. The adaptations needed as the church grows will focus on a number of areas, including worship services, church polity, finances, and, of course, staffing issues. In fact, a congregation’s willingness to deal with the complexities of staff change will determine its ability to move from one size to another because each transition to a larger church requires a dramatic shift in staffing priorities

and responsibilities.

In essence, Mann shows that how a congregation views its professional staff will impact its effectiveness in moving to a larger size. The profiles of professional staff in the four sized churches could be generalized in the following ways:

- Family-size*** The pastor is a member of the church “*family*.” Everyone is in one big relational group, or as Mann states, “. . . a tribe or committee of the whole.”⁴⁷ There would probably be only one pastor. He or she might or might not receive compensation for his or her duties.
- Pastoral-size*** The church is no longer a whole circle of members. Instead, the church is usually identified through the congregation’s relationship with the pastor, “. . . often symbolized by the rapport (or lack thereof) between the pastor and board.”⁴⁸ In other words, most church members relate to the church through their relationship with the pastor.
- Program-size*** In this case, professional staff members (there might now be more than one) move away from direct contact with each congregational member. Now they guide teams of lay leaders.
- Corporate-size*** The professional staff now lead the congregation through their interaction with other staff members. Staff members rely less on lay people input to help to set forth the vision

⁴⁷ Mann, *The In-Between Church*, 21.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

and plan. Lay people fill the ministry roles created by the staff's overall vision as they understand the church's personality, abilities, and ethos. The lead pastor has an essential role, presenting, " . . . a symbolic presence through preaching, presiding, leading the board, and heading the expanded staff, [in order to], unify a diverse and energetic community." ⁴⁹

Mann contends the changes required in these shifts involves work that can be difficult, time consuming, and at points rather messy. There is no quick switch that can be turned on or off to bring about these changes. Perhaps this is the most challenging fact faced by Pastor Ward at Orchard Street Community Church. He must help his congregation to embrace the changes necessary to move from their present size to the next sized church. In this regard then, he must help members grow in their spirituality and attitudes toward change while promoting numerical growth. Key assumptions about church life will need to be reviewed and even debated from time to time. The church leadership teams need to have attitudes of curiosity about how the shifts in congregational thinking can be discovered and managed. ⁵⁰

JOHN PIPER: A DIFFERING VOICE

John Piper issues a caution in the midst of this discussion about adding professional staff to a congregation's ministry team, Piper is the pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minnesota, a post he has held since 1980. Bethlehem Baptist is a large congregation being served by a twenty-member pastoral and ministry team.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 62-63.

While in this very professional setting, Piper has ironically released a book titled *Brothers, We are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry*. He suggests pastors should not view themselves as professionals in the slightest sense. Piper begins his book with the following statement:

*We pastors are being killed by the professionalizing of the pastoral ministry. The mentality of the professional is not the mentality of the prophet. It is not the mentality of the slave of Christ. Professionalism has nothing to do with the essence and heart of the Christian ministry.*⁵¹

He is concerned pastors across the United States place too much emphasis on their professional appearance and status versus their need for “. . . passionate prayer, poverty of spirit, hunger for God [and] vigorous study.”⁵² Piper wants pastors to spend more energy on pastoral responsibilities that center on better biblical knowledge. In this regard he focuses on Doctor of Ministry programs across the nation. He wonders why pastors are very interested in increasing their administrative skills without an equal focus on biblical knowledge. Piper believes seminaries teach pastors to manage and organize their congregations while neglecting or not placing adequate emphasis on the real tasks of the pastoral office. He contends seminaries are promoting poor pastoring skills and sitting idly by as pastors fail to focus on their most important vocational goal, communicating scripture’s message to their congregations. He observes that a focus on biblical languages is no longer a strong component of many seminary profiles. Piper indicates a Doctor of Ministry program is a good idea; it is commendable to work on continuing education and to improve practical pastoral skill, but asks “. . . where can

⁵¹ John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea for Pastors for Radical Ministry*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 1.

⁵² Ibid., 4.

you do a Doctor of Ministry in Hebrew language and exegesis?”⁵³ He argues that biblical language expertise is the most practical pastoral skill:

*Why then do hundreds of young and middle-aged pastors devote years of effort to everything but the languages when pursuing continuing education? And why do seminaries not offer incentives and degrees to help pastors maintain the most important pastoral skill – exegesis of the original meaning of Scripture?*⁵⁴

Of course, the questions posed by Piper point back to a viable definition of “the professional pastor.” In response it would seem that there are few amateur experts on biblical language. An educated and practical ability to translate any of the ancient languages connected to scripture virtually necessitates a professional approach. Lay people within the pews do not usually have even a rudimentary knowledge of these languages, and a person is labeled a professional pastor by virtue of receiving a paycheck for sitting behind a desk in an office somewhere while performing any pastoral skill, including biblical language translation and exegesis. It would seem pastors are professional people after all.

Nonetheless, Piper makes a valid argument and caution that must be noted regarding any pastor’s motives for ministry. There must be a tension within the life and ministry of any pastor, a tension reflecting success versus faithfulness, leadership versus servanthood, maturity versus a childlike kingdom approach, personal and professional rights versus dying to self, and releasing and equipping others versus allowing others to use the pastor. As Piper states, pastors are to:

. . . be filled not with wine but with the Spirit. We are God-besotted lovers of Christ. How can you be drunk with Jesus professionally? Then, wonder of wonders, we were given the gospel

⁵³ Ibid., 85.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

*treasure to carry in clay pots to show that the transcendent power belongs to God. Is there a way to be a professional clay pot? (Ephesians 5:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:7)*⁵⁵

In many ways then, Piper's discussion brings this chapter full circle. He is calling pastors to be focused on ministry, willing to let prestige and position take second place to humility and servanthood. He feels any drive to include the title, pastor, in a list of professional vocations is antithetical to the true demands and nature of Christian ministry. Pastors must be humble and be willing to accept a mission that will last a long time and is often completed without appropriate acknowledgement. In fact, if that recognition does come along, Piper wants pastors to deflect it to God, so that heaven's premier occupant receives all the glory. This form of Christian humility and tenacious grip on the call of God parallels the research reviewed in the opening paragraphs of this chapter.

Those paragraphs outlined a secular study, Jim Collins' examination of the traits that helped propel eleven Fortune 500 companies into becoming great business enterprises. Collins discovered the leaders of those great companies displayed the very traits Piper admires and wants to see in pastors' ministries and lives. The best and most successful secular leaders are humble and tenacious. Scripture calls Christian leaders to model these traits.

Churches would do well to hire leaders who are humble and tenacious. Doing so will help the congregation to grow spiritually. A church will more likely develop spiritual maturity when leadership teams set the example in this area. Congregations will learn of the benefits of humility and tenacity - how a firm grip on the mission and call of God can carry a Christian for many years, and that the completion of that

⁵⁵ Ibid., 2.

mission gives glory to God, not to the Christian individual. The mission held tightly involves evangelism and the subsequent numerical growth of a congregation, even as people grow spiritually.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOME WHO HAVE WALKED THE TRAIL IN THE PAST

Pastor Ward at Orchard Street Community Church can help his congregation plan for the addition of professional staff members. As mentioned in Chapter Two the church will need a beginning theology of professional ministry. Then some of the reading material presented in Chapter Three will help his parishioners grow in their understandings of the staffing challenges before them. All that will be helpful, but in the long run, they may need some hands-on guidance from some real people with real world experience in these staffing matters. This help can come in the form of supportive advice from leaders of other churches who have previously traveled the road Orchard Street Community Church is just beginning.

This chapter focuses on the stories and profiles of such people and churches. This project is based on interviews of pastors and lay people from churches with multiple-staff teams. These people provide a wealth of information and learning about the pitfalls and joys of developing a professional staff group in church settings. The profiles of this chapter were developed through an interview process using the outline of questions as presented in Chapter One.

A pastor and a lay person from each church were interviewed. While some of the interviews were conducted in person, most of the thirty to sixty-minute interviews were conducted by telephone in January, 2007.

The churches profiled represent a variety of denominational and theological persuasions along with various ethnic backgrounds. Some congregations have been in

existence for decades. Other churches are still relatively new, though all but one has been in existence for at least fifteen years. The churches are listed below in alphabetical order.

Community Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	<i>Manchester, Missouri</i>
Ginghamsburg Church	<i>Tipp City, Ohio</i>
Glad Tidings Assembly of God	<i>Decatur, Illinois</i>
Main Street Church of the Living God	<i>Decatur, Illinois</i>
Tabernacle Baptist Church	<i>Decatur, Illinois</i>
Vineyard Christian Fellowship	<i>Urbana, Illinois</i>
University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	<i>Fort Worth, Texas</i>

BEGINNING OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROCESS

This project set out to discover the numerical and spiritual impact of adding professional staff to a congregation. This was the intent even though the following statement was made at the beginning of the project: hiring and growing professional staff cannot occur within a vacuum. In that light a number of topics came up as the interviews took place. In fact, the interviewees tended to focus on issues about staffing, but not necessarily related to the numerical and spiritual impact of their staff teams. There was a lot of discussion about issues that relate to leadership, risk, and staff conflict. Perhaps this flowed from a basic reality that states, "While it is easy to measure numerical growth, determining the spiritual climate and growth of a congregation is much more difficult." One is a concrete measurement, and the other is much more subjective. Consequently, there seemed to be little consensus on how to measure the spiritual temperature of congregations. This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILES

A brief narrative of each of the congregations, as described by those from the

church as well as what is available from their respective websites follows.

Community Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), St. Louis, MO

This mainline congregation has been part of the St. Louis ministry community for more than forty years. Larry Thomas, the Senior Pastor, has led the church since 2001. This congregation began a numerical growth spurt soon after Pastor Thomas' arrival in town, reaching a pinnacle of three hundred thirty in weekend worship services. Since those days of high attendance, the congregation has recently settled into an attendance profile of about two hundred twenty each weekend. It appears the church was not able to effectively handle a worshipping congregation of more than three hundred. This has been the more typical attendance level for many years, unlike the larger worshipping congregation that was seen more recently.

Pastor Thomas says, "This congregation is a typical Disciples of Christ church. We are an eclectic congregation. We have some in the church who espouse a conservative theology and some who are more liberal in their theological approach." This presents a strong challenge to the church in defining its ministry approach. Community Christian finds it difficult to reach new people given the number of popular mega-churches around them who have a more articulated approach to ministry and theology.

Community Christian is presently in the middle of a pastoral search. Shifts in the personnel lineup have come in recent months. In particular, the Associate Pastor, an employee with twenty years of tenure with the congregation, recently left with some unanswered questions about her departure circulating in the congregation. This situation has raised the issues of staffing to a higher level of late. Pastor Thomas knows the church must hire exactly the right person as a new Associate Pastor.

Ginghamsburg Church, Tipp City, OH

The average weekend attendance at Ginghamsburg Church of Tipp City, Ohio is more than five thousand. At first glance that figure is amazing, given that the population of Tipp City is approximately only fifteen thousand. Tipp City is some twenty minutes north of Dayton, Ohio, and within a reasonable driving distance, which helps explain the number discrepancy. Nonetheless, Ginghamsburg Church is a very large church.

Michael Slaughter has been the pastor of this United Methodist Church for more than twenty-six years. The church has changed dramatically while under his care. For decades since its beginning in 1863, the congregation of Ginghamsburg was made up of a small group of faithful members who realized their unique role within the larger scope of Methodism. They were a teaching church where young fledgling pastors learned the ropes of ministry. In the years between 1863 and the 1970s more than fifty young pastors had served the church and then moved onto larger settings. However, when Michael Slaughter arrived in 1979, the small group of forty-five people suddenly mushroomed into larger numbers, and the church's current ministry model began to unfold. The church's annual budget has grown from \$27,000 in 1979 to \$6.3 million at present. The current staff team includes some one hundred fifteen members. Ironically, only three of them are ordained clergy.

The congregation was an early pioneer in the use of modern multimedia in church and worship settings and is known across the nation as such. The focus of the church continues to be what happens on weekends. A large percentage of the one hundred fifteen staff members of the church have job descriptions that relate to weekend worship events.

The theology of the church could be described as rather "non-Methodist" as

some would see the current status of the United Methodist Church in the United States. Ginghamburg Church is evangelical in theology and extremely evangelistic in its ministry base. The church membership is made up a variety of races.

Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Decatur, IL

“It’s worth the drive for a church that’s alive” has been the byline for many years at Glad Tidings Assembly of God in Decatur, Illinois. This statement has been used during their advertising campaigns and is well-known throughout Decatur, the central Illinois city in the middle of the state’s farmlands. Decatur and the surrounding community of 100,000 is home to one of the most lush and productive farming areas of the nation. Archer Daniels Midland, the world’s largest producer of food products, has its international headquarters on the east side of the city. Glad Tidings is also found on the east side of town, in a location that is away from much of the city’s population, which accounts for the congregation’s marketing byline.

B.G. Nevitt has been the Senior Pastor of the church for more than fifteen years. The church has noticeably changed during his tenure. The congregation, founded in 1956, had a worship attendance of about two hundred when Pastor Nevitt began his ministry there. Today, more than twelve hundred gather for worship at Glad Tidings each weekend.

The congregation has nine paid members in its pastoral and ministry program areas. Each member of the present team arrived after Pastor Nevitt began his ministry in Decatur. The staff grouping has a unique dynamic that is rarely seen in congregations with a staff of this size: the church has never fired a professional staff member and only one pastor has resigned during Pastor Nevitt’s tenure. That pastor resigned in order to duplicate the ministries she developed while at Glad Tidings in

another setting. The Assemblies of God national office recruited her to put Glad Tidings' ministry models in place in congregations around the United States.

Main Street Church of the Living God, Decatur, IL

This is the newest congregation of all those being reviewed in this study. It is a congregation known in the city as an African-American congregation that is reaching out to the city at large. The congregation has been in existence for eleven years and is not affiliated with any denomination. Ironically, while the church is young, the ministry leadership team has been working together for much longer. In most cases, those on the ministry team have part of each others' lives and ministry for more than twenty years. They know each other well.

The congregation has been in three facilities during its ministry history and moved into their largest building to date three years ago. This building accommodates four hundred people who attend worship on Sunday mornings as well as an aggressive, weekday after-school ministry that reaches one hundred twenty students. The after-school project is such an important part of the church's ministry, that many of the staff do not begin their workday until late in the morning, knowing that they will be at work until later in the evening each day.

Pastor Thomas Walker is the Senior and Founding Pastor.

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Decatur, IL

This congregation, set on the grassy plains west of the city of Decatur, Illinois, is the largest Southern Baptist Church in Illinois. Tabernacle Baptist Church recently moved into a 150,000 square foot facility that looks typically Southern Baptist – tall white steeple, pews in the sanctuary, and many small Sunday School rooms to

accommodate their Southern Baptist Sunday School set-up and curriculum. The church has had a formidable presence in the city for many years, particularly since Pastor Pat Pajak's tenure began some sixteen years ago.

At that time the church was a single-pastor setting, whereas now seven ministerial staff members attend to the needs and ministry endeavors of the congregation, which has more than eight hundred people in worship each Sunday morning. The congregation outgrew their former facility and had to arrange a Sunday morning schedule that included three worship services and two Sunday School hours in order to accommodate the crowds. Since moving three years ago, the church is pleased to be back to one morning service and one morning Sunday School hour.

Pastor Pajak is well-known in the community and famous for his ability to write sermon outlines that feature alliteration as a preaching tool.

University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Fort Worth, TX

Texas Christian University (TCU), home of the famed Horned Frogs, has 8,200 students in attendance. The home church of TCU is University Christian Church, located right across the street from the campus. Tim Carson, Senior Pastor, is new in his role at University Christian. He arrived there in May, 2006, after fifteen years of ministry in a church in suburban St. Louis, Missouri.

University Christian is a tall-steeple church in Fort Worth that has its roots tied to TCU when both institutions began as one in 1873. Since then, the church and university are no longer seen as one entity, but their history and future are certainly intertwined. The congregation's membership numbers approximately five thousand while twelve hundred are found in worship together each weekend.

The congregation is a lead church in their denomination and known for its

traditional and high-church approach to worship. Classical music par excellence is a defining characteristic of the congregation's two Sunday morning worship services. A third worship event is offered each Sunday night that is best typified as an ancient/future service, somewhat along the lines of the worship styles of so-called *emergent* churches. This service attracts a number of the college students from across the street.

Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Urbana, IL

The Vineyard Church of Urbana, Illinois, is a congregation that was started as a house church in 1978 by a young couple, Happy and Dianne Leman. Happy continues to be the Senior Pastor of the congregation. The church, which follows a charismatic approach to theology and worship, affiliated with the Vineyard church movement in 1986, effectively leaving behind its identification as an independent church body. Pastor Leman now has tasks that go beyond the local congregation in Urbana. He is the Vineyard denomination's representative to seventy sister churches in the upper Midwest. As such, he works with many pastors and has particular insight into the staffing issues faced by a significant number of churches.

The congregation in Urbana has a pastoral and ministry team of twelve and a multiple-building facility that sits on eighteen acres. More than 2,100 people attend the church each weekend.

The city of Urbana is essentially a "university town," as Urbana-Champaign is known as the home of the University of Illinois' "*Fighting Illini*."

CHAPTER FIVE

CONGREGATIONS OF ISSACHAR

If Pastor Jerry Ward truly wants to add professional staff to the ministry team of Orchard Street Community Church, then he will be joining a group of pastoral and lay leaders who say they have much to learn about staffing a church. This is the very real response of the ministry leaders who were interviewed for this project. Their sentiments indicated that while they are certainly involved in creating and leading staff teams, they believe they lack a full understanding of the all the dynamics involved in staffing issues in congregational life.

As one pastor stated, “Although I have a large staff group that I have hired, I do not know all there is to know. I will participate in this study under one condition; you must send me a copy of the final report so that I can learn the results as well.”⁵⁶

Pastor Ward and his congregation must plan to face a steep learning curve if they choose to move into this new ministry model regarding future staff. The learning will be constant and will not cease just after the first or second new hire. It is a reasonable and necessary project, given the call of God of all congregations to move into their future, but it is also fraught with challenges and even the potential of great struggle. The churches and people interviewed indicated such, over and over again. Some of the points Pastor Ward can note are listed below.

⁵⁶ The interviewees’ names will be identified where appropriate throughout this chapter. No names will be given in the places where divulging their identity might create some confusion in reading the chapter. Additionally, the interviews were conducted with candor and some confidentiality in mind. In these cases it would be inappropriate to divulge the identities of those speaking.

ADDING STAFF BRINGS GROWTH

In Chapter One a list was given of expected outcomes and findings. One of those expected outcomes declared that adding professional staff should impact the spiritual and numerical growth of a congregation. In other words, if Pastor Ward moves from a solo pastorate to a ministry team model, then the new ministry employees should increase the church's spirituality and size. As mentioned previously, this is the consensus among those interviewed, but no one had any real tool to measure their convictions.

Perhaps then the best place to begin this discussion is with a different view. While it can be contended that there can be great results from hiring great professional staff, what happens on the opposite side of that view? One pastor stated, "I don't know how to measure the positive impact of having staff people on board, but I do know this: a poorly-performing staff member in the church stifles growth of any sort." In this case, the lead pastor had to spend so much time focusing on a problem employee and the foul-ups she created that he said, "I simply could not get ahead." So while not knowing how to measure the positive impact of professional staffing on spirituality and numbers, it seems clear that poor staffing does not lead to spiritual and numerical growth.

However, regardless of the lack of direct empirical data regarding the positive impact staff can have on a church's mission, a number of the interviewees detailed their convictions in this regard. It seems they each held to a common belief that if the size of a congregation can warrant the financial burden, then a church must hire more professional staff. A lay person stated, "I don't know which comes first, staff or church growth, but there does come a time in all churches when the sheer work load alone requires more staff." Maybe it is a, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" question. Each congregation reported that if they added staff, then more people

seemed to appear within the life of the church; and if more people showed up in the life of the church, they needed more staff. The two issues go hand-in-hand.

B.G. Nevitt of Glad Tidings in Decatur, Illinois, stated it this way, “Adding staff has an impact, absolutely! What they do plants seeds of impact in the lives of people who then grow.” Nevitt gave an example of how the worship leader of his church impacted people. He said, “Our worship leader does more than lead music on Sunday morning. He is responsible to teach worship to our congregation so they will worship God all week long, not just at church.” If that is the result of the worship leader’s influence and if people do learn to worship God within their daily lives in settings apart from the congregation’s corporate worship, then it is safe to imply that their spirituality has grown. If this is the case, then their spirituality has grown as a result of the professional staff member’s ministry. Then, as people grow in their spirituality, their Christianity and spiritual enthusiasm becomes more invasive and recognizable in their lives. It becomes contagious, and soon they are inviting others to church; the congregation is now growing in both spirituality and numbers.

A number of those interviewed shared another common perspective about the impact of staff on spirituality. They spoke of how staff members can or should be used to bring lay people into ministry roles that might otherwise go unseen. This common statement acknowledged that new staff members bring volunteers around them who help the staff person to fill a niche need that was often missing prior to the new hire.

This approach to staff roles is a defining characteristic of Mike Slaughter’s congregation, Ginghamburg Church in Ohio. He laid out the first priority of each of his one hundred fifteen staff members, stating, “Our staff members have this first priority in their job descriptions. They are to bring lay people on board to do the ministry.” Dennis

Mikel, a lay person in leadership circles with Pastor Slaughter, echoed that same sentiment. Mikel has been part of the leadership team of Ginghamburg Church for longer than the twenty-six years of Slaughter's tenure and has seen his church change. He said, "We had to put the rank and file of our church into ministry. That means staff members have to push paper and organize, so that people do the ministry." They have to administrate rather than be the only hands-on ministers of the congregation. If this happens, then spiritual growth within the church and within individual lives will occur as Christians become engaged in ministry.

This is also very biblical. The Apostle Paul clearly stated that the task of those in ministry leadership is to bring each member of the body of Christ to a place of ministry. He stated it this way:

. . . he [Christ] gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV)

Paul is clear that the roles and spiritual gifts of the leaders are to be used to help the Church and each congregation become more mature in ministry. He promotes an expectation that a congregation's staff (i.e. apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) is to bring the rest of the body of Christ alongside them in ministry. Full maturity in Christ is only attained by God's people through involvement in acts of service. That is part of the measuring stick of Christian maturity. A church is to be made up of hands-on representatives of Jesus. It is plain that being built up in faith and maturity occurs when people are active in service.

Apparently the Ginghamburg staff is accomplishing this biblical task because

the lay people of the church are involved in ministry. For example, in recent years the congregation has helped many in the church grow in ministry and thus spirituality. A lay counseling center and program was established that is now run and operated by more than one hundred members trained as lay counselors and lay pastors. The center has become such a powerful force of ministry that it has been spun off from the church as a stand-alone, non-profit ministry with twelve state licensed counselors leading the enterprise. The counseling center actually produces income. That would seem to be win-win for all concerned: a ministry that touches lives, operated by lay people for the most part, and generating income to pay for its own ministry costs. Many churches around the nation would appreciate this counseling care center in the midst of their ministry setting.

Some of the interviewees mentioned another area where the addition of staff has helped a church to grow. Their comments flow along this line of thinking: prior to our addition of staff, we were not really a numerically growing church. We either started to grow, or added staff and began growing. *Then, as the numbers went up and as people got involved in ministry, morale within the church climbed as well. Suddenly we felt healthier emotionally. Is that spiritual growth? Maybe it's the joy of the Lord. That emotional health allowed us to think differently and that certainly was growing spiritually.*

Pastor Thomas Walker of Main Street Church of the Living God, an African American church in Illinois, certainly expressed this kind of sentiment. He noticed that as the church grew, and as staff members' roles promoted more lay ministry, then people's attitudes changed. Pastor Walker is convinced his church members now catch God's vision for their congregation much faster and thus for their own lives. He said,

“When we were small, we did not feel very free. Now we are larger, and there is much greater freedom seen in everyone’s lives.” Since scripture calls for Christians to live and emulate lives of freedom, then certainly this shift at Main Street is a shift of growing spirituality.

Perhaps this new ethos within the congregations comes from a sense of accomplishment. Maybe members of the congregations can more easily identify where God is working, and knowing that God is at work is always a boost to morale.

One pastor noted that his congregation had a significant inferiority complex in the past. His congregation used to be a single-pastorate setting. He states that since the church has grown, and since they have added staff, “There is vision in the house. We are less worried about traditions and more open to those who are not from a ‘normal church’ background. We now have people coming with tattoos and piercings and the like, and they are fully accepted in the church.” The members can see God working in those lives and are able to allow divine grace to flow. Is that because they have new staff members? Is it because they have grown in numbers? Perhaps that is again difficult to measure, but one thing is certain, the congregation has grown spiritually to see these people as being welcomed in worship and in the life of the church.

One other aspect of how adding staffing teams might help a church grow spiritually was articulated by Pat Pajak of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Illinois. Pastor Pajak sees his primary role in the church as the lead preacher and teacher. With that in mind then, his preaching and teaching must be effective. He is quite convinced that adding staff has allowed him to have more time to focus on preparing preaching and teaching material that is more effective in the lives of the congregational members. He

can stress the missional aspect of Tabernacle Baptist with greater power because he believes his sermons and teachings are better simply due to the time he has to prepare. If he did not have those new staff members around him, then his focus could not be directed so intently on sermon preparation. His contention: if he spends more time crafting a better pulpit presentation, then his listeners will learn more and thus be inclined to grow into a deeper spirituality.

In all, it appears that adding professional staff to a church's ministry team brings growth. Those staff people bring new skills, attitudes, abilities, and outreach possibilities to their respective congregations.

So it appears Pastor Ward and Orchard Street Community Church can grow in members and spirituality if new staff members are added to the church's ministry team. The evidence from the churches interviewed indicates that a church will grow, adapt, and develop new outreach opportunities under the direction of new professional staff members. The evangelistic potential of the church will increase. Orchard Street Community Church will extend its base of resources, and they can increase the effectiveness of their ministry.

The evidence also points to some lessons learned by the interviewees that might be helpful to Pastor Ward as he leads his congregation through the upcoming hiring process. Some of those lessons learned are listed below.

CONFLICT

Dave Gardner, the lay interviewee from the Vineyard Church in Champaign, Illinois, stated, "Conflict among the staff will develop if each incoming staff member does not buy into the values of the church." Similar statements were regularly made by

many of the interviewees. Apparently their statements come out of a variety of stressful situations which involve former staff who were fired or asked to resign at the very least. A number of nightmare stories were cited by those interviewed. The problems ranged from simple insubordination between a staff member and the leadership team of one church, all the way to a homosexual affair between two pastors in another church. Each church interviewed had faced staff conflict. Only one congregation had never fired a staff member during the present senior pastor's tenure.

In this regard then, Jim Collins' statement about putting the right staff on the bus in the right seat is more than appropriate. Hiring the wrong professional staff person can bring great pain to a church's congregational life. This is the case because if the staff member performs poorly, then God's resources of time, energy, and money are wasted. Those resources are in each congregation's hands and have the possibility of being wasted or used incorrectly. Additionally, poorly performing staff members jeopardize the forward momentum of a congregation. Apart from the stewardship issues involved, the possibility also exists that great pain will be felt within the personal lives of individuals when the moment comes to terminate a poorly performing employee's tenure. Then, depending on the severity of that pain and how those individuals express it to other people, the pain might move into the larger life of the congregation. There is a lot at risk indeed.

Pat Pajak, the Southern Baptist Convention pastor, explained this dynamic by stating, "Within ninety days of that new hire, the new staff person will have people around who identify with him or her." Particular personalities will blend together, and new ministries will develop, even if the staff member's performances are inadequate. Those attracted to the new staff person will not understand the employee's termination.

For this very reason, Main Street Church of the Living God, the African American congregation interviewed, always first looks inside their church for new hires. Hiring outside the congregation is a second alternative. This way, the leadership team and hiring group know the personality of the potential staff person, and that person should know the congregation's ethos and ministry values. That congregation believes this process is a better hiring approach for their church.

That being said, not all in the interviewed group would agree. One senior pastor indicated he would never hire from within the congregation unless that potential new professional staff member had a previous background in theological training. He felt the theological training and expertise outweighed the risks of hiring someone who might not fit into the ethos of his congregation.

Regardless of where potential professional staff members might be found, there was complete unanimity among all the interviewees when asked what they wished they had done better in preventing conflict. Each indicated they make decisions more slowly now in regards to hiring professional staff. This has been a significant learning for all interviewees. In fact, two churches not only conduct extensive background checks with applicants' references, but submit their new employees to in-depth personality profile testing. They want to see how those new employees will interact with the rest of the staff team. They move very slowly in hiring.

The opposite is true in regards to dealing with problem staff members. While those interviewed might move slowly when hiring in order to prevent errors, they move very quickly if mistakes are made. In fact, a couple of the senior pastors interviewed used Collins' language in describing their hiring habits, saying, "If I get a wrong person on the bus, I move quickly to get them off."

Two interviewers' comments are appropriate here in regards to additional insight regarding conflict among professional staff employees.

One pastor stated, "When we hire someone, I make it quite clear that their opinions are wanted and welcomed, but they will not change the church's direction. That is not open to their input. They must buy into the church's direction before they are hired."

Another pastor declared, "The person being hired has to meet the unanimous agreement of the rest of the professional staff team. If that unanimity is missing, we will not hire."

This issue of dealing with conflict seemed to generate more discussion and/or observations than any other topic raised in the interview. The overall response would indicate that those in hiring roles realize the best way to deal with staff conflict is to prevent it in the first place by wise hiring. Once conflict develops, a downward spiral can soon lead people and a church into confusion and pain. If conflict comes up after the hiring has taken place, then there will be pain for many. An axiom could be stated here. In fact, it is one of the most significant points of this study.

**Adding the right professional staff will cause a church to
grow spiritually and numerically.
However, churches should hire slowly and fire quickly.**

POSITION PRIORITIES

Pastor Ward's present setting is different from that of the people interviewed in this project since he is in a solo-pastorate. Each church represented made a decision

similar to Orchard Street Community Church some time ago. They decided to grow and to add professional staff to their ministry teams. Pastor Ward's church is still evaluating that decision and plan of action. Consequently, any staffing decisions presently faced by the interviewee churches are different than what Pastor Ward faces. That seems a simple dynamic, given the different choices faced by a church of six hundred or more with a multi-staff team in place versus Pastor Ward's solo-pastorate setting. In fact, the larger churches would seem to have more room for error than Orchard Street Community Church. If they make a mistake, as dreadful and painful as it might be, at least there are more people to carry the ensuing burden. In Pastor Ward's case, a mistake has a much greater possibility of being disastrous.

Nonetheless, each pastor but one interviewed for this project served in a solo-pastorate setting at some point in their ministry career. They can identify with Pastor Ward and Orchard Street Community Church since most of them led their present churches from a solo-pastorate and a small congregation into the multi-staff teams now in place. What common lessons did they learn?

Each senior pastor interviewed indicated that they are involved in the decision process of hiring professional staff members. They lead the process and have full hiring and vetoing power. Each believed this input was essential.

This might be different for Orchard Street Community Church as pointed out in Sally Mann's book, *Size Transitions*, mentioned previously. Orchard Street Community Church is a pastoral-size congregation where Pastor Ward has some influence, but his voice carries fairly limited authority in congregational matters. Each member of the congregation also has authority. That is the operating ethos of a solo-pastorate-sized church. Yet, the leaders of the churches interviewed all stated that the senior pastor's

voice must be the most authoritative in regards to hiring. Can Orchard Street Community Church change their thinking patterns in this decision? Will a search committee make the decision about who to hire? Will Pastor Ward have to allow that much authority to voices in the church as a tradeoff for pushing the congregation to hire new staff members in the first place? After all, Pastor Ward will have to expend a lot of his leadership capital in pushing for the decision to hire, let alone that he would be the main determinant in who to hire for what position. This problem alone is why many churches do not add staff and grow. As Pat Pajak indicated in his interview, "Ninety-seven percent of the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention have less than one hundred people in worship because they do not realize they need to add staff to grow."

One anecdotal story in this matter deserves attention. How much authority should a senior pastor have in regards to hiring? The story surrounds the role of a senior pastor who was hiring the first person after he arrived in town at the church he presently serves. This church was not a mixed race church with any sort of minority population within the membership and was moving from a solo-pastorate setting to a multi-staff ministry team format. The pastor conducted a personal search of some sixty candidates to fill a worship position. The papers and profiles of two finalists were in his hand as he approached the governing board, asking for their input. One finalist was African American; the other was white.

The pastor went over both sets of papers and his notes with the board. As he was coming to the conclusion of his presentation, a distressed board member interrupted, objecting to the presentation, saying, "You have spent thirty minutes telling us about the black guy. I want to hear about the white guy for more than two minutes."

The pastor said at that moment he came to his conclusion. He decided that if someone on the board struggled to that degree about hiring a minority, then the board member's opinion was probably found elsewhere in the congregation. "Right then and there, I made my decision," the pastor stated in the interview. "We hired the African-American. I felt like I had to make a statement about who was in charge and that we were going to be a church that was about to change. It was my decision to make. It was my job to bring change to the church. I have never looked back on that decision with regret. That second person I hired twelve years ago is still on staff, and he is dearly loved and appreciated by the whole congregation. He was the first person I added to my team."

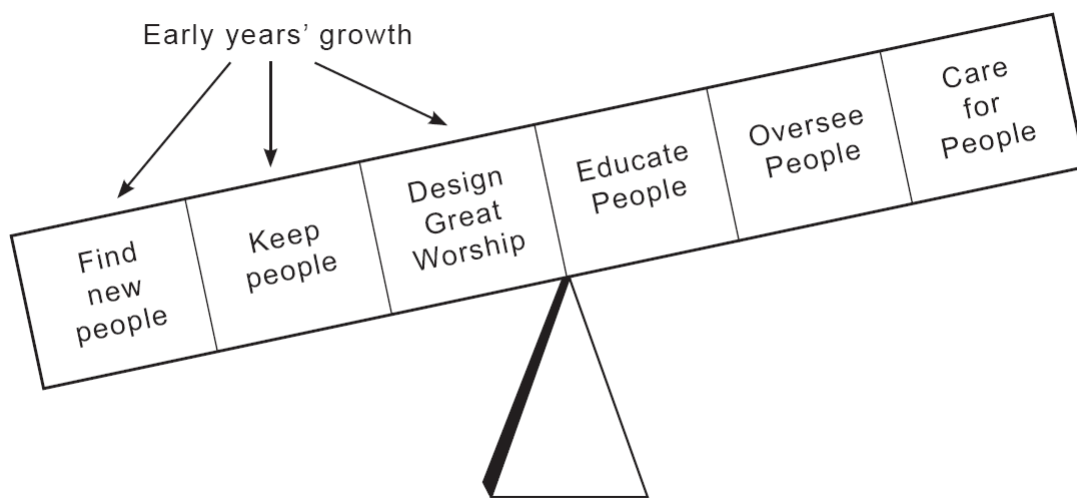
The offended board member has left the church. The pastor is in charge, and the church has changed.

So if Pastor Ward can call the church to add professional staff, and if he can arrange to be certain to lead the charge in hiring, what position should be filled first? There is a variety of options including Christian Education, Youth, Worship, and Associate Pastor. The interviewees did not present any common thinking in this regards. They offered various approaches. For example, one pastor had a very specific order of position hiring that he had used in moving from a solo pastorate to a multi-staff ministry team. He quickly responded with the following priority list.

1. Senior Pastor
2. Youth and Music Combination (which later divides into two positions)
3. Education
4. Associate Pastor
5. Then positions based on the communities' needs

Another pastor indicated he would choose someone to work in the area of worship as the second person to be hired in a solo-pastorate setting like Orchard Street Community Church. He said, “Many would choose youth and children’s ministry, but I believe a worship person is best. Worship is the key to bringing a church together, so it is the most essential.”

Ironically, only one pastor mentioned an intentional outreach position as a possibility. Perhaps this sole response is because few have thought through the issues of Gary McIntosh’s insight as reviewed in Chapter Three. McIntosh pointed out that a church will become out of balance if it does not keep the “finding new people” box at the forefront of its ministry as seen in the diagram below.



Following McIntosh’s model, which seems reasonable and rather biblical, would not preclude any one position from being the second position filled at Orchard Street Community Church. Instead, as shown in Chapter Three, Pastor Ward and the congregation must simply be certain that they hire someone who will continue to focus on the left-hand side of the fulcrum. The temptation will be to hire someone to take care of the needs of those already in the church, on the right-hand side of the scale,

but that would be unwise at this point in the church's mission plan. The church must plan carefully as they move into this first hiring of additional staff members. Pastor Ward will need to help his congregation to move slowly and deliberately.

Michael Slaughter of Ohio stated this principle most succinctly when he said, "Staffing is a strategic decision based on a church's initiatives. For example, when we declared that we wanted half of our people to experience a hands-on ministry event in another part of the world, I knew we had to ramp-up our mission staff to facilitate that initiative."

The process of hiring additional professional staff members must be approached carefully and with measured steps. The church's overall mission must be considered and evaluated before a decision is made about what position to create or who to hire. Pastor Ward will need God's leadership throughout the whole process.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The final question posed in each of the interviews reads, "How have you discerned the voice of God and the power of the Holy Spirit through your hiring practices?" That question was usually followed by each of the interviewees in a similar way saying, "Wow, that's a great question!"

Each interviewee indicated the work of the Holy Spirit has to be front and center in any decision that involves adding professional staff. The results of adding can be so rewarding or they can be so devastating that the Holy Spirit's direction is absolutely essential. There was full agreement to this idea from all who were part of the study.

When asked about what criteria were used to determine when it was time to add new staff, a common response centered on God's leading and prompting. While the individual congregations were involved in pragmatic planning or strategic visioning,

they each felt that God had to be leading them through that process as it led up to the hiring questions. For example, they were asked what role the budgeting process had in determining their plans. Common responses indicated that while available funds and money questions certainly played a part in the decision, in the long run, each step into hiring additional staff was a step of faith. One pastor said, "There is never enough money, so we seek the Holy Spirit; and if he is leading, then we have to figure out how to pay for it." A lay person stated, "We want the best person for the position within reason; and if God is calling that person to us, then we have learned the money will be there."

So the respondents truly expected God's leadership to be at work in their churches and staffing decisions. One honest pastor did admit though, "I lived under a dark cloud when I was in the middle of having to fire an associate. At the time I was too pre-occupied to actually hear or see the work of the Holy Spirit very clearly. However, now in retrospect, I can see how God led me and us through those difficult days." That is great news for Pastor Ward. There might be days of difficulty ahead, but this pastor's experience shows God was at work, even in the midst of difficulty.

Perhaps this point of God's plan cannot be emphasized too strongly. In the middle of decisions about strategy, budgeting, reviewing applicants' interviews and papers, God is still at work. One lay person expressed surprise in the early days of his church's upswing and growth. He said, "When our senior pastor arrived years ago to our solo-pastorate church, he brought an expectation that Christ was going to work in individuals with him. Now we expect it!" Apparently that was a new idea to that congregation at the time.

The work of the Holy Spirit can indeed be used to bring new ideas to a

congregation. This can be seen in the life of Ginghamburg Church in Ohio, the United Methodist Church which really does not look or act like a typical United Methodist Church. As mentioned, the church was an early pioneer in contemporary worship services and the use of the electronic media in worship. Dennis Mikel, the lay person interviewed from the congregation, stated, "We certainly did not grow in the conventional way you would expect. The Holy Spirit led through a series of unforeseen events that began with the unexpected retirement of our organist. We did know what to do, so [Senior Pastor Slaughter] Mike got out his guitar, and we used that because we had to." In retrospect Mikel sees that small act of a personnel change as a Holy Spirit-driven event. He is convinced they did not move in the regular or normally-prescribed order of growing and hiring, but their church grew and changed because they were Holy Spirit-led.

This is what Pastor Ward and the congregation of Orchard Street Community Church can expect. They can expect the Holy Spirit to lead them into new days, into a larger place of ministry, and into a deeper walk with God. They will face many questions in the days to come. There will be days of great difficulty and days of even greater triumph.

As the church grows, some of the ways in which they can now nimbly move about as a small church will be few-and-far-between. As one interviewee noted, "As the church gets larger, it becomes harder to steer the ship in a new direction." That might be true, but by then they will have new experiences of the Holy Spirit's leadership behind them.

Pastor Ward should lead his congregation from being an average church in an average city involved in an average ministry. The call of scripture expects him to lead

his people to new outreaches and people who need God's grace to be applied to their lives. Adding professional staff to the church's ministry team can help facilitate those outreaches. The people who are presently in the church will grow, and the congregation itself will grow in spirituality and numbers. The Holy Spirit can and will lead them.

In 1 Chronicles 32 the author lists all the men who aligned themselves with the young warrior David before he became king of Israel. They numbered in the hundreds of thousands. They all had the same goal, to fight on David's behalf if needed. In the midst of all those men, there was a small group that was different from all the others. The full group was a group of valor and power, but the small group had an extra ability that went beyond the average outlook and spirituality of all the other warriors. Scripture says that among those in the vast and growing army were:

. . . men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do – 200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command.

1 Chronicles 12:32 (NIV)

Somehow these people were different than the thousands of fine people round them. They knew how to read the contemporary culture about them and then make credible and wise decisions about the future.

There are many fine churches with stable ministries that seem quite average. However, there are a few congregations who can move beyond average if they are willing to read the times and review their culture and the culture around them. Then, with the help of God in this area of staffing, they can move into new adventures for God's sake. The Holy Spirit can help them to become congregations of Issachar, who know what to do.

CHAPTER SIX

SQUARE BOXES WITH METAL HANDLES: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND EVALUATIONS

This project, focusing on the possibilities of staffing for Pastor Jerry Ward and Orchard Street Community Church, has raised a number of issues that need evaluation. The following chapter is a beginning point for this further evaluation and study. Key learnings and future questions will be cited.

OBSERVATIONS ALONG THE WAY

The interviews of church leaders regarding their understandings of staffing issues raised a number of points that were not fully germane to the main body of writing. Some of their observations did not particularly speak to adding staff to a congregation's ministry in an effort to bring spiritual and numerical growth. This was to be expected since, as was stated at the beginning, staffing a church does not occur in a vacuum. However, these additional insights regarding staffing matters prove to be helpful in general. They follow in a fairly random order.

A suspicion: the first key hiring decision to be made by a congregation centers around who will be the lead pastor of the church. The outcome of that decision sets the primary possibilities of spiritual and numerical growth in place. The wrong decision will lead to stagnation in the congregation's life and ministry. The correct decision might lead to growth, taking into account other factors outside of the hiring decision. Not all capable leaders can lead any church to grow, but an incapable leader cannot bring

growth to any congregation.

One senior pastor mused, “I used to hire based on a fairly traditional model of starting with a job description and then searching for a suitable candidate. Of late I have wondered if it would be better to discover who is remarkable and available and see how he or she might fit into our ministry setting.”

Perhaps this approach is more in keeping with Jim Collins’ approach to find great people to put in the right seat on the bus, rather than basing a decision on the job description alone.

Hiring staff is the key to sustaining growth. Lay volunteers can sustain a growing ministry’s demands for only for so long before the daily responsibilities of their families, vocations, and daily life legitimately interfere. They may not like those interferences, but this is a fact of life. Lyle Schaller puts it this way, “In most cases, the sheer size of a particular job increases with an increase in the size of a congregation.”⁵⁷ At some point in a growing church, a ministry task will outgrow the availability of lay people’s time and attention.

Additionally, hiring staff provides a greater opportunity for accountability regarding ministry performance and excellence. Volunteers cannot be easily challenged if their ministry performance is poor. This is not the case for paid staff.

Regarding the solo-pastorate church wanting to add staff: Those in smaller churches under four hundred in worship might not be the most able to provide insight

⁵⁷ Schaller, *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church*, 76.

for the solo-pastorate church because they are still trying to find their way also. This is probably the case particularly for long-established congregations since ministry patterns and the congregation's ethos might be firmly established and difficult to change. Those congregations over six hundred in worship are also still trying to find their way. They, too, may not be able to effectively give positive directions, but they can more definitively say, "Do not take this or that road!"

Perhaps the question, "Do staff bring growth?" is not the best question. A better question is this, "If we are growing, can we continue to do so without adding professional staff?"

As a church grows, the leadership and hiring team faces an increasingly more difficult task. As one pastor said, "We have had to hire better and better, learning to fish in bigger and bigger ponds."

Smaller churches must change their ethos and methods when they move to multi-staff ministry teams. These changes might be difficult to move through and could meet some resistance from the congregation. The process of change and the dynamics of resistance to change must be a focus of study for leaders. It can be assumed that change will face resistance from those in the congregation and even potentially from those in leadership who help initiate it in the first place. Two examples bear noting. First, supervision of staff must flow from the senior pastor and not from a lay personnel committee. Second, salaries should not be made known to the congregation or from one staff member to another. If salaries are known, staff

members soon begin making comparisons about the abilities, job performances, and attitudes of each other. Salaries were not public information in any of the churches profiled in this study.

Congregations want to be full of people who understand the implications of serving a God of grace. Members want to extend that grace to each other. They are aware grace covers a multitude of sins. This focus on grace often leads churches to forgo the difficult task of reviewing the mistakes of the past. The following often occurs in churches: a problem in their staffing situation develops, and the leadership teams have fuddled or muddled their way through to a solution, then the situation is often left alone. Leadership teams must rethink this practice. They must be willing to ask the tough questions that will help them put policies and procedures in place to prevent similar problems from occurring again.

This is not a repudiation of grace. Instead, it is embracing grace, acknowledging what mistakes were made and striving to be more mature and less prone to mistakes and/or sin the next time a difficult situation might come along. It is allowing for the work of the Holy Spirit to be found within the grace of acknowledging errors, in order to seek forgiveness of God and to learn to avoid similar problems in the future. Developing this kind of habit in the aftermath of difficulties is essential. Is it possible that congregations have missed the teaching voice of the Holy Spirit in the past by forgoing evaluation? God's forgiveness does not preclude evaluation of mistakes.

As one lay person interviewee stated, "I wish we had risked more and then evaluated harder. We would have let some people go more quickly, but we would have learned and matured more quickly."

EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

The following expected outcomes were listed at the conclusion of Chapter One.

Brief responses to those expectations follow:

1. ***Hiring professional staff impacts a congregation's growth potential, both spiritually and numerically.***

The interviews support this expectation.

2. ***Good staffing decisions bring tremendous blessings and growth.***

The interviews support this expectation.

3. ***Poor staffing choices and/or poorly-made decisions to add or not add staff impact a congregation in a negative fashion.***

The interviews support this expectation.

4. ***Growing congregations make both good and bad staffing decisions as they learn new dynamics of this part of congregational life. If a congregation grows from small to large, hiring practices present a steep corporate learning curve.***

The interviews support this expectation. In fact, the learning process does not seem to end.

5. ***Growing congregations evolve in their understanding of how to handle staffing decisions.***

Perhaps a better way to explain this would be to point to Alice Mann's models of how churches have to change as they grow. It is not so much that growing churches evolve in their understanding of staffing decisions. Instead, a growing church must change in almost every aspect of congregational life if the growth is to be sustained.

6. ***A growing congregation that does not learn how to effectively hire staff will not continue to grow.***

The interviews support this expectation.

7. ***There will be times of staff conflict in all growing churches as they move into new understandings of their role and ministry in a local setting.***

While all the profile churches did experience some struggle or conflict, significant conflict is not a necessary pre-condition to growth. Intense conflict is common, but not in every case.

8. ***Unresolved staff conflict has a negative impact on the growth potential of congregations.***

The interviews did not adequately address this issue.

9. ***Some staff members' abilities will not grow with the church's demands and growing ministry. This will force the senior leaders of a church to make difficult choices.***

The interviews support this expectation. Some senior leaders had to terminate staff for this reason alone.

10. ***The Senior Pastor must be involved in the decisions about hiring professional staff members.***

The interviews support this expectation.

11. ***Adding professional staff to a congregation's ministry can be joyous or tumultuous, productive or destructive.***

The interviews support this expectation.

12. ***Church leaders intuitively know they need God's guidance and the***

power of the Holy Spirit as they make staffing decisions. They know these decisions will have a significant impact on congregational life. Finding that voice of God in the midst of their decision process is often a long, arduous task.

The interviews support this expectation and church leaders earnestly seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. They have learned that hearing the voice of God in this matter means moving slowly when making hiring decisions.

WISHING SOME THINGS WERE DONE DIFFERENTLY

Each person interviewed for this project indicated there were times along the way when they wish they and their church had looked at ministry in a different way. They acknowledge that experience has helped them to gain new insight into the staffing challenges faced by their respective congregations. Each felt that some decisions of the past were credible and resulted in a better ministry environment for their churches. They acknowledged, however, that some decisions did not prove to be helpful, and in fact, some decisions proved to go beyond neutral to actually damaging. Similar statements could be made about the design and implementation of this project.

The fictional situation faced by Pastor Jerry Ward is encountered by many, if not most, churches within the United States. As mentioned previously, the majority of American congregations are small in number, in solo-pastorate settings. In this regard then, the project does address some of the questions pastors like Jerry Ward will face if they choose to lead their churches into a growth process through the addition of professional staff. However, there is a myriad of issues that Pastor Ward will not find addressed in this project. They can be summed up in the following manner:

This study would have been more productive and useful to these smaller churches if it answered this question: “How Can Churches Add Professional Staff in Order to Bring Numerical and Spiritual Growth?” instead of the stated title, “Can the Addition of Professional Staff Impact the Numerical and Spiritual of a Congregation?” The “how to” versus a “can it happen?” paradigm might have been more helpful for congregations like Orchard Street Community Church. In the long run, that appears to be the more pressing issue. Common thinking states that the right professional staff person helps a church develop. No one interviewed and no written material seems to oppose that view. There is a more basic question that needs examination, detailing the steps needed to implement a successful method to add professional staff. This study did not get to the core of that issue in an adequate fashion.

In fact, the observations of all those interviewed indicate there is a dearth of credible and reliable information available in this area. They each learned of a procedure that worked for them through a trial-and-error process. That route was often painful and exhausting. No pastor would wish the pain onto a fellow Christian ministry leader. Those interviewed were hiring people as their churches grew from small to large. Their course of action was often complicated in many areas of church life, let alone staffing. As mentioned previously, staffing a church does not occur in a vacuum. This project would have been more successful if it would offered more “how to” tips for those engineering the road from smaller to larger. Perhaps that would be the most productive area of future study, simply a list of, “Do this, then that, and then this is what is next.”

On another note about this study: Sadly, participation in this project presented an unexpected dilemma. It was more difficult to find churches willing to participate than

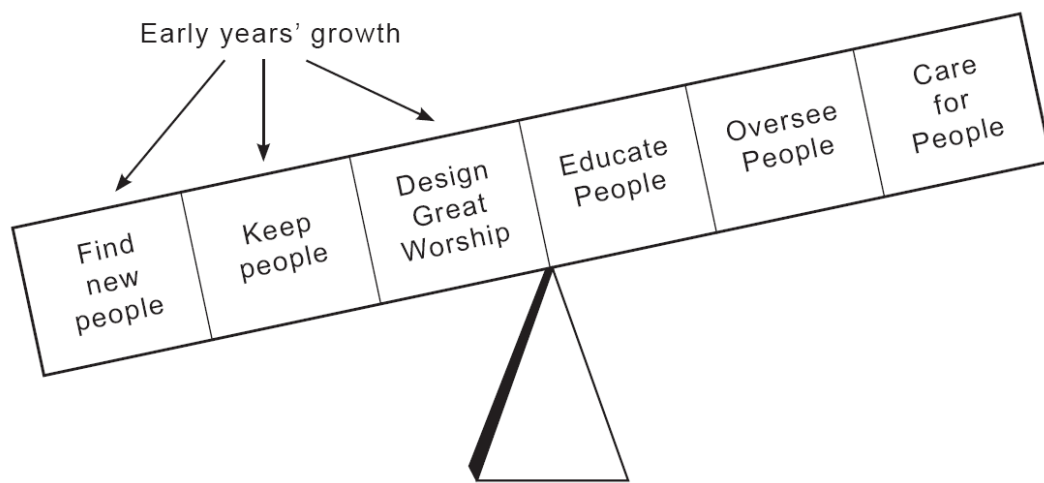
originally anticipated. Two of the churches mentioned in Tom Rainer's book, *Breakout Churches* were contacted. It seemed they would want to participate and share their experiences since his book was published. Regrettably, neither church chose to even respond with, "Not interested, but thank you."

THE MAIN DISH TAKE-AWAY

Finally, patrons of Chinese food establishments often leave the restaurant with left-overs of the main ingredients of their meal, rice and a few remainders of a vegetable or meat dish. These take-away dishes are packaged in relatively square boxes with light-weight metal handles. They are not the ordinary styrofoam containers dispensed in other types of restaurants. The shape and handles make them different.

Here then are the two main take-away aspects and learnings of this study. They constitute the key points and ironically, though both are small in discussion here, grabbing these handles of information about staffing will prove to be very helpful.

First, hire to be certain the left-hand side of Gary McIntosh's fulcrum receives attention. As a congregation grows older, the church will become more inclined to look to the right-hand side too easily.



The second main take-away is listed on the next page

Second,

**Adding the right professional staff will cause a church to
grow spiritually and numerically.
However, churches should hire slowly and fire quickly.**

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VITA

Wayne Kent, the author of this work, has lived and worked in a number of varied settings. He was born in 1958, in Katoomba, a small town on Australia's east coast. His family heritage is Australian for many generations. When he was eleven, Mr. Kent's immediate family immigrated to Vancouver, Canada. He spent his teenage years there.

He met his wife Leslie while attending college at Oral Roberts University, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration.

Following college the Kents traveled for five years with Living Sound, a contemporary Christian music group. That travel took them to most states in the United States, but the bulk of their time was spent overseas in Europe and Africa. The European portions of their tours focused on ministry in Eastern Europe, before the demise of Soviet-style communism.

Mr. Kent began pastoral ministry in 1985, in a solo-pastorate church in Oklahoma. He began ministry at First Christian Church, Decatur, Illinois, in January 1994. It, too, was a single-pastorate congregation, but now employs seven full-time pastors and/or professional ministry personnel in addition to support staff. This is Mr. Kent's current place of ministry.

Mr. Kent graduated with a Master of Divinity, Cum Laude in 1994, from Phillips Graduate Seminary in Oklahoma.

This project is presented in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Doctor of Ministry Degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Mr. Kent's Doctor of Ministries at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary were completed in summers of 2000, 2001, and 2002. His studies will be completed in May 2007.

Mr. Kent and his wife have two children, Jacqueline and Benjamin.